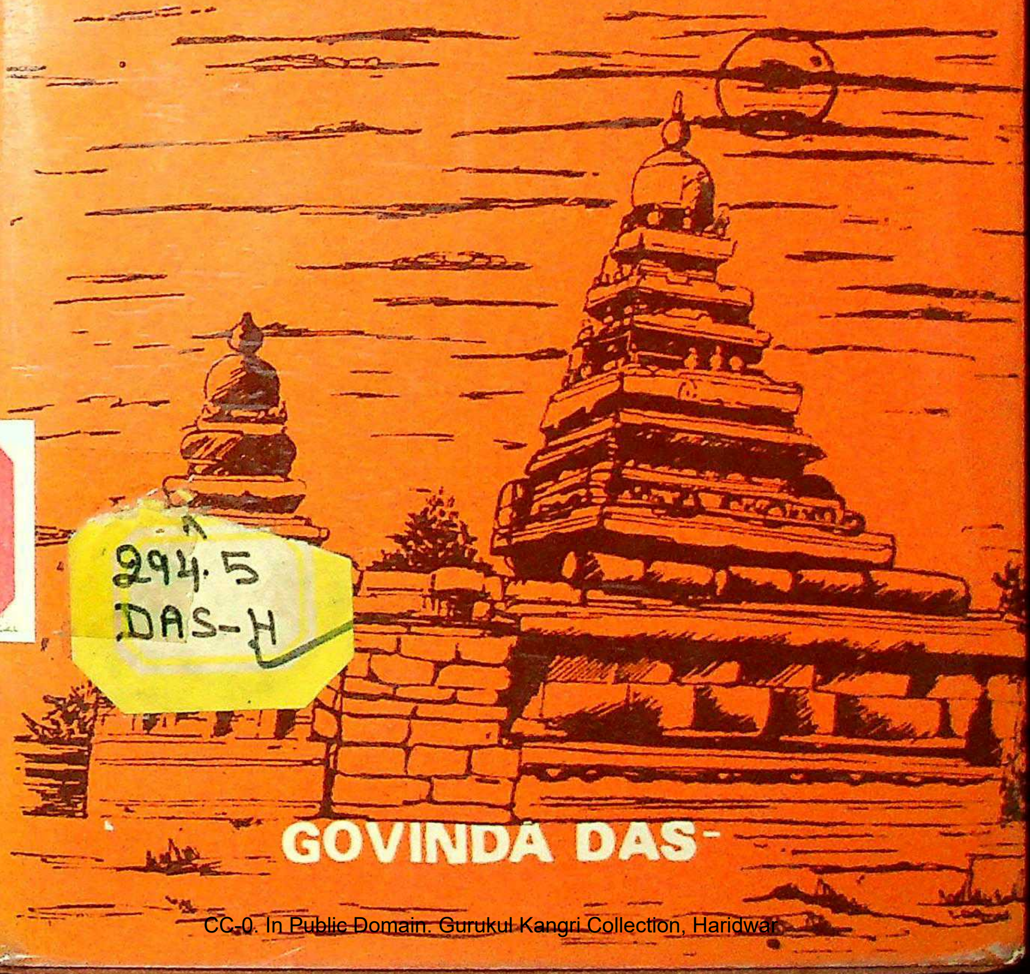
HINDUISM

GOVINDA

294.5
DAS-H

HINDUISM



294.5
DAS-H

GOVINDA DAS

R
294.5
DAS-H

89715

गुरुकुल कांगड़ी विश्वविद्यालय
कृपया पुस्तक के ऊपर कोई निशान आदि
न लगायें।

Stock Verification-2024

पुस्तकालय
गुरुकुल कांगड़ी विश्वविद्यालय,
हरिद्वार
वर्ग R 294.5 DAS-II आगत संख्या 89715

पुस्तक-वितरण की तिथि नीचे अंकित है। इस तिथि सहित २० वें दिन तक यह पुस्तकालय में वापिस आ जानी चाहिए। अन्यथा १० पैसे के हिसाब से विलम्ब-दण्ड लगेगा।

Stock Verification-2024

HINDUISM

R294.5, DAS-H

89715

HINDUISM

89715

पुस्तकालय
पुस्तकालय
गुरुकुल कांगड़ी विश्वविद्यालय

GOVINDA DAS

SANJAY PRAKASHAN
Delhi-110031

Published by :
Parveen Kumar
SANJAY PRAKASHAN
533/31, Subhash Mohalla,
Gandhi Nagar,
DELHI-110031.

R
294.5
DAS—H

Delhi—1986

Printed at :
Efficient Offset Press
DELHI

PREFACE

ABOUT the year 1905, I had occasion to draw up a catechism of the Hindu Religion, as a possible text-book for college students. The questions and answers were arranged in four parts. It was published in 1908, under the title of "Hinduism and India, a Retrospect and a Prospect." Feeling dissatisfied with the work, as the years went by, I began revising it in 1912, and practically rewrote the whole eliminating the catechistic shape and embodying a good deal of information newly gathered by me, which has made the work almost three times the size of the earlier one. Various reasons delayed the publication. The enterprising publishers began work on it however in 1922. But my health has broken down so completely during the last five years that it has been impossible to give to the book the much needed finish and polish of a final revision, or even to look through the proofs properly. The first portion of the book is being presented to the public for what it may be worth under these adverse conditions.

As said before, the work was planned out in four parts;

viz. I. Basic Principles.
II. Basic Rites.
III. Ethics.
IV. Religio-Social Reform.

The first two parts are being placed before the reader in this volume. The others are ready. But as the whole work had grown very huge, the head of the firm of its publishers, my old and valued friend and patriotic citizen of India, the Hon'ble Mr. G. A. Natesan, Editor of *The Indian Review* and Member of the Council of State of India, suggested that the remaining two parts should appear in a separate volume. I readily agreed.

The purpose of the book I have endeavoured to state at length in the Introduction. Here it only remains for me to acknowledge the help I have received from kind friends, without which it would have been impossible to bring out the book at all. Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Ganganath Jha, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Allahabad, who helped me greatly in bringing out the earlier book, has placed me under yet further obligations by re-arranging portions of this. Mr. P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar has also given similar assistance. My younger brother, Mr. Bhagvan Das has also given to the book the benefit of revising it as a whole in manuscript.

But, I ought to add that none of these helpers are to be regarded as responsible for or as identified with any of the debatable opinions expressed herein. I alone am responsible for them.

Benares.
Ram Nabami
Chaitra—Shukla 9,
Vikrama 1981.
13th April 1924.

GOVINDA DAS.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.

PAGE.
A Critical Period ... 1
Failure of Hinduism in the recent past ... 2
Exposing of evils desirable ... 3
Hindu polity based on a hereditary oligarchy ... 4
A lesson from Asoka ... 5
" Caste by birth, thro' past Karma " ... 7
The miracle-monger and the guide-to-Heaven ... 7
Nefarious influence of Supernaturalism ... 9
Immoral influence of Mathas etc., ... 10
The Purana-teachers and hypocrisy ... 11
Benumbing prestige of great names ... 12
Inertia misnamed conservatism ... 12
Lack of historical spirit ... 13
Pernicious standard of judgment ... 15
The danger of explaining away old texts ... 16
" Occult lore " of Theosophy ... 17
False nationalism, and its results ... 18
Back to the Vedas, a reactionary cry ... 19
The purpose of the book ... 20
Plea for individual liberty of conscience ... 22
The need for a complete civil code ... 24
Comparative study of religions necessary ... 25
The evolution of Christianity and Islam ... 26
The evolution of Hinduism ... 27

The scope of the work ... 28
A Hand-book for progressives ... 30
Interpretation of rites and ceremonials ... 33
What may be hoped for ... 34
Hopeful force at work ... 35
The cause of unrest ... 36
The coming Humanist nationalism ... 37
Kashi the best centre for the new light ... 38
The Bhagavata Dharma ... 39
Our Duty ... 42

PART I.

A History of the Chief Sanskrit Sacred Books of the Hindus and of their Principal Teachings.

CHAPTER I.

Sec. 1 Definition and Sources of Hinduism ... 45
" Origin of the word ... 46
" Hinduism—free and untrammelled ... 50
" Who is a Hindu ? ... 57
Sec. 2 Definition of Dharma : ... 61
" The *lakshana* of Dharma ... 65
" Its secondary meanings ... 68
Sec. 3 Sources of Hinduism ... 77
" Hinduism, an Anthropological process. 80

CHAPTER II.

Detailed treatment of the Source-books of Hinduism.

Sec. 1 The Vedas ... 81
" The meaning of Veda ... 81
" The four Vedas ... 85
" The eternity of the Vedas ... 87
" The Samhitas ... 92

,, The Mutual relation ... 93
,, The Atharva ... 94
,, The difference between the Atharva and the other Vedas ... 96
,, Stages of tribal evolution ... 98
,, Old and new Hymns ... 100
,, Method of interpretation ... 101
,, Vedas, indexes to social conditions ... 104
,, The Brahmana texts ... 105
,, The Aranyakas ... 107
,, The Upanishads ... 108
,, A classification of the Upanishads ... 109
,, Other sacred books ... 110
Sec. 2 The Sutras ... 113
,, The Smritis ... 114
Sec. 3 The Puranas ... 115
,, Causes of multiplication ... 118
,, The wrong and the right ways of dealing with the Puranas ... 119
,, A list of Puranas ... 121
,, The points of difference between the Vedas and the Puranas ... 122
Sec. 4 The Tantras ... 124
,, 5 The Law digests ... 128
,, 6 The Ramayana and the Mahabharata... 128
,, The date of the Ramayana ... 137
,, The Ramayana in other languages ... 138
,, Some special points of note ... 139
,, The Mahabharata ... 140
,, The Harivaṁsha ... 142

,, The Mahabharata and the Brihatkatha. 142
,, The evolution of Gods ... 145
Sec. 7 Language and script ... 147
,, Sanskrit and the Prakrits ... 150
,, The script ... 152

CHAPTER III.

Hinduism : Its Fundamental Teachings.

Sec. 1 The one God and the chief minor Gods. 158
,, Asura and Sura ... 160
,, The three major Gods ... 162
,, Brahma ... 162
,, Vishnu ... 163
,, Rama ... 164
,, The Krishna cult ... 167
,, Buddha ... 173
,, Kalki ... 178
,, The theory of Avataras ... 179
,, Shiva ... 182
,, Current worships ... 183
,, Images ... 187
,, Aryan migration into India ... 189
,, The paucity of Hindu Art ... 191
,, Music and Architecture ... 195
Sec. 2 The theory of Yugas ... 199
Sec. 3 The constitution of man physical and super-physical ... 205
,, The three states of consciousness ... 208
,, Other worlds ... 210
,, The nature of Hell ... 211
,, Rebirth ... 213

Sec. 4 The Doctrine of Karma ... 215
" Three kinds of Karma ... 218
" Dharma and Adharma ... 220
Sec. 5 Yajna ... 222
" The meaning of *Nastika* ... 225
" Changing Hinduism ... 226

PART II:

Rites and Customs.

CHAPTER I.

Sec. 1 Nature and growth of Customs ... 231
" The special rites and usages Hinduism... 232
" The true Nature of the Samskaras ... 234
" The Samskaras ... 236
" Upanayana ... 237
" Sandhyopasana ... 244
" Mantra ... 245
" Pranava-upasana' ... 247
" Gayatri and its uses ... 247
" Upasana ... 261
" Chief features of Upasana ... 266
" Ganesha ... 267
" Marriage ... 272
" Treatment of woman ... 274
" Age for marriage ... 276
" Forms of marriage ... 276
" Dissolution of marriage and widow marriage ... 282
" Niyoga ... 285
" Monogamy ... 286
" Divorce ... 287

,, Christian Libels ... 289
,, Celibacy ... 294
,, Ashrama ... 301
,, After-death rites ... 307
,, Attitude towards death ... 313
,, Ashaucha—Ceremonial Impurity ... 315
,, Ceremonial of purification ... 318
,, Shaucha—purity ... 320
,, Prohibition of eggs and flesh ... 324
,, Connection between mind and body ... 331
,, The evils of drug and drink ... 331
,, Shantis, ... 343
,, Vratas ... 343
,, Utsavas ... 347
,, Yatras ... 349
,, Dana ... 350
,, Prayashchitta ... 357
,, Pitris ... 363
,, Shraddhas ... 367
,, Sapinda ... 374
,, Pravara and Gotra ... 380
,, Degenerate practices ... 386

CHAPTER II

Caste

Conflicting theories on the caste system ... 393
Caste—the heart of the present-day Hinduism. 394
Caste nomenclature and differentiated grading. 396
Failure of efforts to improve or abolish caste. 399
The coming death of the caste system ... 400
Two strong barriers to progressive ideas ... 401

CONTENTS

What it means to-day ... 403
The word Varna *i.e.*, Caste ... 404
The system—its origin ... 406
Caste: functional and hereditary ... 409
Caste divisions ... 411
Successive stages ... 413
The Malabar system ... 414
A Nepal analogy ... 417
The Shudra ... 417
Other theories of caste ... 419
Accounts of caste-system in the Ancient-books ... 422
The Four Castes ... 423
Decline of Hindus after Mahabharata war ... 425
The Four castes as four typical stages in the evolution of a Jiva ... 428
Further examination of the system ... 429
The origin of the sub-castes ... 433
Greater elasticity in earlier times ... 434
The Panchama caste ... 435
Our duty to the Panchama ... 437
Mutual duties ... 441
Enfranchisement from Brahmanocracy of to-day 442
Caste-system, an unmitigated means of regress. 444

HINDUISM.

INTRODUCTION.

They are slaves who fear to speak,
For the fallen and the weak:
They are slaves who will not choose
Hatred, scoffing, and abuse,
Rather than in silence shrink
From the truth they needs must think.

LOWELL.

A Critical Period:—The period covering the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries after Christ has been and continues to be a very critical one in the history of India. On our answer to the many insistent questions now being raised depends our future. The present constitutes one of those occasions in the life of the Indian people when by a right choice it can immeasurably hasten its evolution on the path of progress and enlightenment, or retard it woefully by a wrong choice. There has been a tremendous awakening, in all departments of the national life, political, social, etc., especially since the close of the Great European War in November 1918.

Forces are at work, which are re-energising the many and various races which inhabit this vast country and form the Indian people. A sense of national solidarity and of national self-respect has arisen, and if these are to find expression in a new lease of healthy life, in things more substantial and permanent than more or less vague philosophic truisms for the platform, or sharp political controversies and struggles which may provide immediate palliatives for present maladies, we must make a thorough overhauling of our whole organism, our whole way of living, our whole 'culture', and cleanse it diligently of all the degenerate tissue and toxic stuff that has gathered therein.

Failure of Hinduism in the recent past :— Hinduism has been so far worsted in its struggle of a thousand years with Islam. For various reasons, its spirit became narrow, and it could no longer succeed in so expanding its polity as to absorb Islam, as it absorbed in the past, in its more vigorous and vitally elastic days, many a religious polity, which it covered with its own class-caste names and whose special deity or deities it included in the Hindu Pantheon. Nor has it proved itself to be so compact, strong, well-organised and intolerant as to completely prevent this Semitic intrusion within its political boundaries. In this tremendous struggle it has barely succeeded in keeping itself alive. That it has done so is due largely to the fact that an even greater internal degeneration fell upon Islam, especially in India, less firmly founded as it was upon the laws and facts of human psychology.

But since the forces of Islam have been reinforced by the augmentation of a strongly individualised and aggressively militant non-Asiatic Christian civilization, the question that is ever present to the Hindu consciousness, waking or sleeping, is: "Can we withstand this double impact? Can we weather this furious storm, threatening to engulf this ancient civilization?"

Exposing of evils desirable :—There is considerable diversity of opinion among people as to how far the naked truth about the condition of thing in the country is to be given out. I, for one, am not for hiding anything from the knowledge of those most concerned. Those who think it censurable that I should bring out (as I propose to do in the course of the following pages) facts and situations of our Hindu life which are generally ignored in public, should draw away the covering from the ulcers, should remember that this is done only because of my firm belief in the certainty of their healing if only the true state of affairs is realised.

It is also necessary to remove all cause for the well-founded reproach that the defenders of Hinduism are generally under the influence of a narrow-hearted prejudice, palliating, dissimulating, nay, even denying facts which appear unfavourable to their cause; and that while they are alert to detect the "fault, small as a mustard seed, of another, they, even seeing, see not the fault, big as a *bael* fruit, of their own."

Such a course of blind self-justification is neither

राजन् सर्षपमात्राणि परच्छिद्राणि पश्यसि ।
आत्मनो बिल्वमात्राणि पश्यन्नपि नपश्यसि ॥

(*Mahabharata, Vidura-Prajagara-Niti.*)

right nor indeed possible to pursue with any chance of success, and if, in the process of self-purification, other than friends also learn the truth as to the condition of things, where is the harm? The real shame is that there should be such skeletons necessitating concealment in the cup-board. Let us throw them out and purify the place, and not preserve them in the secrecy of our darkened chambers.

Hindu polity based on a hereditary oligarchy:— The fact that the Hindu polity, as interpreted and worked since fairly ancient times, has been based on an hereditary oligarchy buttressed by slavery, is kept in the back-ground. This parasitic Brahmanic polity demanded an outer world of lower castes and serfs to draw on for its nourishment and growth; and this world was, at all costs, prevented from either absorbing the system or rejecting it—for in either case it would inevitably mean death to the parasite.

The conditions of negro-slavery in America afford a near parallel to it—where any "white" found teaching a slave was punished with fine and imprisonment. There is not much difference between the treatment given by the "whites" to the "natives" and the "Asiatics" in the European colonies and that given by the "highest castes" to the Indian Shudras, especially the untouchable castes. It is all very well to regret the decay of the old polity, but who of the modern twentieth century India—except perhaps the privileged high caste man, and certainly not all of them even—would care to see it revived, if that were possible, and live under it, however much lip-service may be continued to be paid to it? Unless it is relieved of its many very unhealthy accretions and is thoroughly "revised" and "brought up to date", retaining only its good fundamental and basic laws and facts of psychological science and its philosophic principles, its days are numbered and nothing can prevent its deserved destruction.

Only in a thorough realisation of this hard fact is there any chance of removing the many grievances of the vast mass of Hindus, who have so long been kept under a spiritual, social and economic serfdom which reacts upon the selfish few and makes them slaves also to yet others, politically. The pointing out of the arbitrary limitations which have brought us to our present degraded state can scarcely be labelled as destructive. The work is constructive, for it suggests ways by which all such nefarious influences might be overcome and the emancipation of the individual and the renewed progress of the community secured.

A lesson from Asoka:—It was the dense ignorance of the people which has made them the willing co-operators of de-spiritualised Brahmanas and de-martialised Kshattriyas in the reduction of themselves (*i. e.*, the people) to what is practically serfdom. But for this eager acceptance by the slave of his chain, the vast and powerful empire of Asoka would not have been wrecked. The "Shudra" king, all powerful despot that he was while alive, had concentrated all power in himself, and, like all autocrats, had failed to see the necessity of creating an *organisation* which would be powerful enough to become independent of autocratic support, and unselfish enough—because of being based on the people's rights and privileges and working by and through their help—to carry on an emancipating and progressive policy. This is the fatal flaw in all unlimited monarchies.

When the ruler's strong grip is loosened the fabric falls to pieces. The "orphaned" subjects have remained helpless babies all along, and never learnt, by making mistakes, to stand on their own feet and shoulder their own burdens. It is only "popular" governments, "broad-based upon the people's will," that possess stability. As soon as Asoka, the hated Buddhist, was dead, the ever watchful Brahmanic hierarchy, sensitive to every change in the environment, took prompt advantage of the weakness of the great King's successors. Through his Brahmanised wife the Commander-in-chief Pushyamitra was won over to the cause of the priest-intriguers. The new King was killed at a grand review of the army, which he was holding, by some undetected person, and Pushyamitra's son, Agnimitra, installed as King, and the people quietly acquiesced, indifferent to the dynastic change.

Tulasidas, with the poet's insight, hits at this apathy of the people about their government when he makes Manthara, the *confidante* of Kaikeyi, say to her mistress, when she was unwilling to become the storm-centre of the palace intrigue which killed Dasharatha, made the queens widows, and drove Rama and Lakshamana into exile :—

को उ नृप होइ हमाहिं का हानी।
चेरी छांडि न होब रानी ॥

" What is the harm to me, whoever be King?
I cannot ever change from slave to queen!"

The Establishment of Brahmanic Supremacy :— It was under the patronage of Pushyamitra and his strong-willed wife during the reign of their son Agnimitra, that the major portion of our old literature was recast in the neo-Hindu mould, superseding the Vedic polity and absorbing the Jaina and Buddhist Schismatic teachings and practices as also many another popular and aboriginal faith practice ; and the twist was given them which established the Brahmanic supremacy in Hinduism on the firm rock of " caste by birth, through past Karma " and unchangeable by the temperament and the deeds of this birth. Birth henceforward became the sole criterion and merit was garrotted.

The miracle-monger and the guide-to-Heaven:— The miracle-monger and the guide-to-Heaven are ever with us, whether in the time-honoured garb of Sadhus or in the modern one of *Avatara-mongers* and spiritualistic teachers, ever ready with their pseudo-scientific juggleries and the other stock in trade of their thaumaturgic profession. To all those who are acquainted with the mischievous and not unoften vile practices and doctrines of various "inner schools" and "esoteric sections" and "Outer heads" and "sole accredited agents of Tibetan Mahatmas of the White Hierarchy" and "Eastern Schools" and "Maha-Mandalas" and "Dharma-Mandalas" and soul-and-body hypnotising "pledges of obedience", such strong condemnation will cause no surprise. There is no evil for which these new "Agents of the Almighty" cannot provide a panacea, no desire which they cannot satisfy by the power of their *Mantras* and amulets. No journey, whether it be to the sensuous heaven of the gods, or the planets and stars, or towards the blank of Mukti, is beyond their powers. The masses are steeped in superstition and even the higher classes are very far from being free from its subtle and pervasive influence. All sorts of crude views are being promulgated from different platforms. But though it may not be possible to secure a hearing for a rational philosophic religion for the time being, the attempt must not be given up because the forces of obscurantism are so strong. Some time, some day, the people will awaken and gladly welcome the light against which, they had, in their lamentable ignorance, so long and so obstinately shut their eyes. Quackery and knavery have a life tougher and more changeful and prolific than that of Ravana and Mahisha and Raktavirya, and they take much killing. The pathetic gullibility of untaught and even taught Hindu nature is heart-breaking. It ever offers temptation irresistible to all who are inclined that way, to exploit it to the utmost for their own selfish ends. Not till people realise that there are no royal roads and shortcuts to 'liberation' and 'paradise', will they be able to shake off the nefarious influence of vendors of patent nostrums and owners of 'way-charts.'

Nefarious influence of Supernaturalism :—The fear of the supernatural has been so well and so dexterously ingrained into the very fibre of the ordinary Hindu's being that all power of individual initiative, of vigorous self-reliance, of fearlessness of consequences, has been effectually destroyed. He has forgotten how to shoulder his own responsibilities. The fear of the "Policeman" is ever present; and he cannot stir even his little finger without the advice and help of those whom he had installed as his living outer consciences the priest and the astrologer. The lurid episode of the hypnotic and malignant influence of Rasputin over the Tsar and his family, and their murder and down-fall one after another in 1917, are extremely vivid illustrations for Europe of what is said in the text about India. While our authorised and professed religion is Vedic, the really potent and operative parts of our daily religious life are the primitive beliefs and superstitions and their corresponding rites. This inheritance is ever present with us even in this "twentieth century of progress and enlightenment."

Immoral influence of Mathas etc :—The innumerable Mathas, Akharas, temples, with hosts of Gurus, are standing evidence of the unquenchable demand of the people for 'other-world' lore and 'other-world' sex and stomach pleasures, which these dole out for hard cash, when not something much worse; witness the notorious trial which took place some years ago in the High Court of Bombay, known as the Maha raja case, in which the heads of the Vallabhacharya sect figured so prominently and so ignominiously. No religion is free from this incubus. The head of a sect of Mussalmans in India, who has a large following in the Islamic world is alleged to issue regular written orders on the keepers of Paradise to give the use of so many date-palms, after his death, to any follower who gives him a corresponding full price in cash here for the written order, which is handed over to him here.

The many modern Societies and Samajas started for similar purposes, whether run on oriental or occidental lines, meet exactly the same want, the seeming difference being due to a thin coating of English education and a light-hearted use of ill-understood scientific phrases in the case of the latter. Fearful is the ignorance of the people which has caused this demand, and hideous the debauched intellect of the purveyors to this unhealthy demand, sapping as it does the national life of the country, and causing wholesale demoralization. It is the system of administering oaths of secrecy, of working amongst pledged members and disciples only, that is at the root of the mischief. If the veil were once rent and the "Prophets of Khorasan" (*vide* Moore's poem "Lalla Rukh") forced to display their ugly physiognomies to the world which they have been deluding, faith would soon be replaced by resentment, and a clean sweep made of these carrion-birds.

The Purana-Teachers and Hypocrisy :—The Purana-preachers of to-day and the innumerable sectarian Sadhus, Bairagis *etc.*, are mostly reactionaries of a bad type, catering to the passions and prejudices of the mob for the purpose of exploiting them. Equally bad offenders are the majority of the vernacular newspapers, and even some Indian edited English ones, who, though knowing better, do not act up to what is true and right. As long as the semblance of agreement with "orthodoxy" is kept up, faith asserted in passionate *words*, in loud-mouthed talk. nobody will molest you. Keep not only the eleventh "commandment" "thou shalt not be found out," but even more strenuously the twelfth "thou shalt not confess thy transgressions." Do anything and everything but admit it not, and thou remainest a saintly member of thy caste within the holy embrace of Hindudom! Exchange hypocrisy for sincerity, then if thy *actions* but deviate a hair's breadth from the authoritatively "right" ones, thou art an out-caste, a pariah, one to be shunned, and every banded interest howls round thy devoted head.

Penumbing prestige of great names:—We must also learn to guard against the benumbing prestige of great names, and not shrink from exercising our own independent judgment or be afraid of disagreement as if it were a mortal sin. On the contrary, not to exercise one's freedom of thought and to succumb to 'authority' merely because it is authority, is a serious dereliction of duty not only to one's self but also to society at large.

The great need of the times is not so much an instruction in Theology which is camouflaged under the catching title of religious education, but such a training of the emotions that they will not be easily misled. Not big doses of soporific faith but training in that kind of scientific scepticism which leads to investigation, to a weighing of conflicting evidence, is, what is required, if this evil is to be properly guarded against. We must not trust without testing. People do not generally realise the overwhelming part emotion plays in the formation of opinions and beliefs; and how, by a mere process of incessant repetition, more than doubtful propositions come to be regarded as infallible truths, to question which shows the traitor's spirit richly deserving of a traitor's fate!

Inertia misnamed conservatism:—Some readers, more philosophically inclined, might object that never since the world began nor even in the distant future will it be possible for masses of men to live without unreasoned faith and ceremonial rituals, and that I am attempting to demolish too much. In reply I may state that I have not attempted anything so wild; and if, for persisting in such attempts despite the certainty of ill success, any justification were wanted, I might cite the incomparably great instances beginning with Krishna and the Bhagavadgita, going on to Buddha and the Pitakas, and not ending with Dayananda Saraswati and his Satyarthaprakasha. Not a single one of these movements has ever been fully and completely successful, or can ever be. But that is all the more reason why every one should do his little best to keep up their essential idea. It is only through hard knocks and persistent hammering that some little progress can be made. The tremendous force of inertia, misnamed conservatism, is something enormous, and is not to be swept away by even many strokes.

Lack of Historical Spirit:—No encouragement has been given to the historical study of the current religio-social ideas and practices and of the agreement or otherwise of these ideas with each other, nor to the careful sifting of oral or manuscript traditions and of the additions, subtractions and alterations which have been made either deliberately or through imperfect preservation and transmission through the long ages of their existence. On the contrary, writers have all mostly devoted themselves to a mythico-allegorical and mystical method of explaining all beliefs and practices and of investing them with the aureole of religion.

This method or, to be more accurate, want of method may succeed by means of verbal jugglery and psuedo-science in inventing explanations of some few isolated ceremonies, institutions and customs; but it fails lamentably when attempted to be applied to them as a whole, or even to parts consistently. It so fails for none other than the very simple cause, that the writings to be interpreted have not been preserved in their pristine purity, but are a tangled skein of many threads. Glossators who follow this method of explaining, or rather explaining away, see harmonies in the facts and ideas of the various writers where none exist; they regard as true and valid the facts and arguments of writers alleged to be inspired; and they insist on reading back into these old texts meanings which are the product of the modern development of Hindu thought. Gough, in his "Philosophy of the Upanishads," was the first to sound this note of warning against such trifling with the principles of historical and textual criticism, but the advice fell on unheeding ears. It is only by an earnest comparative study of social institutions and religious systems that sanity of view becomes possible with regard to these subjects, which are ordinarily only seen through the thick fog of intolerance and bigotry. It should also be remembered that the texts to be interpreted are not the product of one period or of one school. They are separated from each other by vast distances of time, locality, and outlook.

There is the further very real danger to the future progress of Hinduism in the manufacturing of plausible explanations of old texts and rites, which cause great discomfort to the modern mind by their crudities, absurdities, and even immoralities. If a few such have been explained away, then why not the rest? So the whole lot, good, bad, indifferent, continues to exist together, unsifted, undiscarded, barring the path of improvement. This lack of the historical spirit is also responsible for the all too familiar phenomenon of the constant harping on the grandeur and glories of a state of things which have come down from a vanished past and which must therefore be preserved carefully. Such an attitude cannot but act as a solid wall of opposition, even in the case of persons endowed with genius and philanthropy making them blind to the patent defects of current practices and, under the guise of explanations and apologies, preventing all efforts at improvement. Much worse, necessarily, is the case of the average Hindu.

Pernicious standard of judgment:—We must also beware of a certain pernicious standard of judgment that has been set up. It is voiced even by Tulasidas, who is generally a very sane guide, but in this instance has been grievously misled by the fervour of his Bhakti:—

समरथ को नहि दोष गोसांइ ।

(To the powerful no sin attaches).

This is but a paraphrase of the words of the Bhagavata palliating the amours of Krishna.

तेजीयसां न दोषाय वह्नेः सर्वभुजो यथा ।।

(As the fire devours every-thing without becoming contaminated, so neither are the mighty defiled by sinful actions).

The legal fiction of the West, that 'the King can do no wrong', echoes the same wrong spirit. Indeed, I am not sure whether it was meant to be taken as an injunction, as popularly believed, or was only the bitter wail of the "under-dog" at the impotency and the hypocrisy of the world, which is ever ready to throw principles to the winds, to acclaim the "upper dog" and "greet the rising sun," and which insists on the last drop of blood in its commerce with the weak. Such a double standard of moral judgment, utterly lax for the great and the powerful, and exceedingly stringent for ordinary humanity, is a most flagrant debasement of all true morality. Moral turpitude has to be unflinchingly denounced as such, wherever and whenever met with.

The danger of explaining away old texts :—A word may be said here as to some recent attempts by some over zealous advocates, to "explain" and "justify" all sorts of current Hindu dogmas and rituals in the light of misapplied "theosophical teachings" without discrimination. This procedure is obnoxious as much to the orthodox and the revivalist as to the reformer. Orthodoxy fears to be inextricably landed in a bog through the methods of "occult lore" and psuedo-science, and will not tolerate such tamperings with its old-world methods of justification.

It has been authoritatively laid down that in the "occult lore" of Theosophy lies the future life of Hinduism, as of all other religions. This alone can defend them from attack, can illuminate their obscurities, can justify their sacraments, can explain their scriptures. The Light of Theosophy, which is the light from the one and only lodge of the Masters of the Wisdom, is the Light which has become obscured in all religions, and the religions which reject it will perish.

Now if by 'Theosophy' is meant what the word etymologically signifies, *viz.*, "God-wisdom", Brahma-Vidya, Atma-Vidya, and an attempt is made with a sincerely judicial mind, to discover how much of what is now passing for Hinduism is based upon, or derived from, or in accord with, Brahma-Vidya, then I should only heartily welcome the attempt, as supplementary and complementary to mine. For Brahma-Vidya is to be found at the heart of every great religion; as Vedanta in Hinduism, as Vishuddha-marga in Buddhism, as Samyag-darshana in Jainism, as Gnosis-mysticism in Christianity, as Sufism in Islam. But, unfortunately, "Theosophy" because of vested interests, has become a narrow creed and as inchoate and indefinite as present-day Hinduism; and all kinds of untested, unproven, or even unreasoned assertions by self-proclaimed clairvoyants and initiates and initiators of all kinds of sects and orders are now beginning to pass for Theosophy. The defence of current Hinduism by such theosophy, is as easy as useless. It is an object of suspicion to the orthodox, who smell "rival prophets" behind it, as much as of sceptical ridicule to the reformer, who sees "superstitious reaction" therein. For the present work, I make no other claim than that it is a "rationalist" endeavour to sweep away the rubbish from the home of Hinduism, after which such substantial furnishings as may become visible, might be polished up by others.

False nationalism, and its results :—We must guard very carefully against a very natural but none the less reprehensible and harmful vanity, which is being tickled in so many diverse directions these days.

Our social system, our religion, arts, literature, everything in short, by the deeply rooted emotional power of Contra-imitation, is urging us incessantly to reject everything foreign, and to adhere to "our own." This is a serious danger in modern India. Let us realise betimes that it is quite possible for conservatism, and the preserve-at-any-cost policy to go too far, and inflict a permanent, if not a fatal, injury on the country

Let us try to realise what has been the result of this policy on our condition. It is an indisputable fact that so late as barely fifteen hundred years ago the present-day civilised and cultured European in the van of progress in every department of life was almost a barbarian. He had over-thrown the Roman Empire, and was being gradually conquered in his turn by its civilisation and by the newly risen religion of Jesus. Look again at Hindu civilisation, as depicted in the Mahabharata and study the art of life as delineated therein, it was far in advance of anything that Europe had, down to so late as even three hundred years ago.

The beauty, the delicacy, the refinement, nay even the durability, of our silk and cotton fabrics, of our dyes, our jewellery, our art of building, our dykes, canals, bridges, our knowledge of metallurgy which could forge the steel pillar at Delhi—which has stood unrusted for well-nigh 2000 years—have all but perished. Even our boasted philosophy is being hard-pressed from Europe and will possibly be swallowed up by that of the more virile European. What shall we then say to these thoughtless and thriftless children of wise and rich parents, now rich in their conceit, and wise only in desperately hugging the shadow, while the glory and the substance have departed; who have not only not improved upon their splendid start in the battle of life but have actually retrograded most shamefully.

The conditions are not yet quite hopeless, and if we would awaken to the danger, and grasp the situation with firm unfaltering hands, there is still full hope for our regeneration and survival.

Back to the Vedas, a reactionary cry :—We should then begin to realise that the modern cry 'Back to the Vedas' is as thoughtless and harmful as it is impossible to carry out into practice. It is like expecting a grown up man, with all his merits and demerits, to 'grow' back into a babe. The result of such an attempt on our part would only end in imbecility, even lunacy. It is impossible to forswear the experiences of the last six thousand years, even if it were expedient as it is emphatically not. Not "back" but *ahead forward* should be the cry. *In that only lies life.* As things are, at present, "Sanatana Dharma" has become a splendid means of advertising and a war-cry, when people, in their reactionary eagerness against every thing modern and foreign, do not stop to ask awkward questions about its meaning and fitness.

The purpose of the book :—The idea underlying the composition of the book has been that of the great principle that whatever makes for unification, for sympathy, for expansion, for enlightenment, for toleration, for freedom, is to be encouraged: and all that makes against these, that is in fact separative, destructive, narrowing, productive of hatred and strife, curtails liberty, encourages superstition and credulity is to be discouraged. Naturally in following out this idea in exposition, it has been my misfortune to have to run counter to many a prejudice sanctified by time, and upheld by the all-pervasive support of numerous hierarchies possessing practically unlimited power, and working through the terribly all-potent caste-organisations; and to have to point out their real character and condemn them in no uncertain tones. Interested people are bound to call a book of this nature all sorts of names and taboo it. For the book attempts to destroy the fabric spun with much labour by the

R
294.5
DAS-H

89715

spider for the entrapping of flies. Truth ever interferes with the exploitation of large masses of human beings by comparatively small groups of the strong and the cunning; whether politically, by means of cleverly devised laws and constitutions and overwhelming military power, by selfish rulers; or religiously and socially, by means of the hocus-pocus of supernaturalism, under the garb of "occultism" and "religion" and "faith," by fraudulent and immoral priesthoods, whether lay or cleric, organised or isolated, indigenous or imported.

Another object in writing this book has been to induce my stay-at-home or merely book-learned fellow-religionists into taking a broad-minded and tolerant view of religious and social schisms. Our ignorance of what is or what is not Hinduism is profound. This needs no pointing out to those of my readers who have done any moving about in this vast country with an observant eye and an enquiring mind, as the present writer has been doing for the last thirty-five years. I have tried to do this by describing in a handy form a small number out of an enormous mass of widely divergent or even mutually opposed *practices*, and of no less widely divergent and contradictory *teachings* of Sanskrit books, all held to be equally orthodox, by their special devotees, even though they are utterly irreconcilable with one another. Of course such a work has its dangers. It can be utilised by an enemy as a very convenient storehouse of material for mud-flinging. But this is a game at which two can play. It would behove the would-be mud-flinger to remember that his private cup-board also contains similar skeletons, which his adversaries can get hold of with equal ease. No religion so far has been free from the most deplorable teachings and practices, in the course of its life from age to age. It is ill-service to humanity that their respective followers should indulge in the barbarous pastime of mutual throat-cutting. Rather, let each examine and cleanse his own religious cup-board, by flinging away from it the skeleton, as I have tried to do here. Let each help to broaden the basis of his own beliefs and practices till they become *all-embracing* instead of remaining girt round with frowning ramparts of arrogant orthodoxy and defended by virulent abuse and belittlement-ramparts which are imprisoning-walls to the dwellers themselves rather than any protection against others; abuse which brings narrowness to the abusers' own minds rather than any harm to those against whom it is directed.

This little took is a plea for individual liberty of conscience and of action and if this liberty of the individual in matters social and theological is fully conceded by my countrymen, then they may be sure that the political and economic liberty which they are all united in demanding from their English and Indian rulers of the country could not be denied them for long. Is there no danger that political freedom in the hands of persons imbued with the ideas of theological and social regimentation and tyranny would be fraught with the gravest peril for the future of the country?

Liberty is good, liberty is worth striving for with all one's might, but it must be an *all-round* liberty, sweet reasonableness in *every* sphere of life. It is a very shortsighted faith which imagines that hatred and intolerance in matters religious and social are compatible with solidarity in matters political and economical.

My second object is to put a little courage, if it were possible, into the faint hearts of our new elective legislators. The older generations of our legislators took their courage in both their hands and passed such Acts as those, of Widow-Marriage, Civil Marriage, Rights of Converts, and so on, some of which *have* created havoc in the personal laws of Hindus as well as Muslims. My earnest prayer to our present day legislators is not to parade the airs of a righteous squeamishness and not to demand conditions which are impossible, anywhere in the world, not excepting England, as Sir Reginald Craddock, the then Home Member did, when he asked for a *unanimous* demand from the *whole* of India in favour of Bhupendra Nath Basu's Civil Marriage Bill. Such preposterous conditions were not prescribed when the Englishmen in office, of their own initiative, chiselled out large blocks of civil law containing provisions obnoxious to both the Hindu and the Muslim legal systems, on the subject of Transfer of Property, Mortgages, Specific Relief, Contracts, and so on, to say nothing of the criminal laws of the two religions, (which barbarous laws they swept aside for a territorial and humanitarian one, a law which recognised no racial and theological pretensions, and which hanged a sacrosanct Brahman for murder as it did an untouchable Shudra), or of such special measures as dealt a direct below to the civil laws of both these, like the Converts Relief Act, or the legalising of the marriage of Hindu Widows. These Acts tore to pieces the old orthodox laws of Inheritance.

Our new elective legislators can afford to be more courageous now and give us a complete Civil Code, organising all those portions of Personal Law which have been left to the mercy of the Law Courts and are therefore quite chaotic now. The latest civil codes, those of Germany, of Japan, of Switzerland, enacted in 1911, embodying the latest word of Western civilisation, might be utilised, seeing that India is bound up with the West in many ways now.

I am not pleading for a *binding* but only for a *permissive* territorial legislation. It will have a tremendous *educational* value. When it has been 30 years before the country, the people will cease to jib at it. They will find that those who have taken advantage of it have not gone to perdition, but are the happeir for it. Territorial laws, as against sectarian and personal ones, are a very important factor in national welding as France found in the days of Napoleon, as Italy, found in the days of Cavour and Mazzini, as Germany found in the days of Bismarck, and as Switzerland with its three different languages and races and sects has found. India too will learn in time that personal civil laws are a relic of a different and less advanced state of society, are a divisive and not a welding force.

Our Ruling Princes, whether individually, or unitedly through the newly formed Chamber of Princes, could take far more effective action in all such matters than any British Indian Legislature, if only they could be induced to take active interest in immortalising themselves, by enacting "Code Napoleon"-s and covering every branch of law. Less than six hundred years ago one strong-willed ruler of Bengal by promulgating the Digest of Jimutavahana completely changed the law of inheritance for the whole of the Bengali people. The law of adoption differs very widely from community to community. In matters of marriage what is the general practice among the high caste Brahmans and other castes of the Madras Presidency, namely the marriage of girls to their own maternal uncles, is looked on with abhorrence as incest in Upper India. The Indian Princes instead of abrogating their function of being fountain-heads of legislation, should strenuously take it up again in the interests of a unified Indian Nation.

Comparative study of religions necessary :—Only as we learn to probe beneath the surface and expose to light their course of development, do we discover points of relationship and interdependence between the different religions, undreamt of by the orthodox believers imbued with the 'revelational' nature of their particular bibles. Then we begin to appreciate the force and value of a historical and comparative study, and begin to realise—though it may be, in the case of genuinely orthodox students, with much mental suffering the great gulf between it and the ecclesiastical modes of thought and practice. Then we begin to see that every faith is but a compromise with a pre-existent faith and social polity, and that no founder of a new faith has ever succeeded in wholly freeing himself from the influence of his surroundings however great a 'rebel' he might, be; and much less has he succeeded in completely sundering the traditional moorings of the people amongst whom his reforming lot was cast.

The evolution of Christianity and Islam :—The early beginnings of Christianity were also, like that of latter-day Hinduism, rooted in dislike and fear of the world. But the Christianity of the Sermon on the Mount had to be *practically* displaced by one suiting the temperament of highly vitalised and virile races before it could become a world-religion, from being but a schism from a local religion. Its 'other-worldliness' had to be tempered by mixing with a good deal of 'this worldliness' before the aggressive fighting races of Europe could adopt it. The religion of Christ plays practically no part in European life. What Christianity did for Europe was to *organise* the warring tribes into a federal organisation under the hegemony of the Pope of Rome; and make it possible for its tremendously enhanced power, under the control of a single will, to be employed for purposes of aggression, and of infliction of much misery on others under the pretence of religion. Similar has been the case with the religion of Islam. It united the scattered warring tribes of Arabia under the banner of Muhammad, and by turning into other paths the energy that was self-destructive, made Islam a world-power, which overran three continents. For good or for evil the present Hindu temperament is 'religious' (in a somewhat different sense); even as the Englishman's attitude to life is pecuniary. You rouse the Englishman to fury if you touch his pockets. We have yet to discover what will touch our peculiar "weakness," and help to organise us into a homogeneous whole.

The evolution of Hinduism :—The evolution of the vigorous Vedic religion was far different. Its optimistic and energetic teachings became pessimistic and invertebrate in the latter days. The causes of this degeneration were chiefly physical. Immigration into a warm enervating climate produced anemia and nervelessness; than early parenthood, especially motherhood, supervened; and finally came poverty. All three acted and reacted on each other and ultimately compounded themselves into the one cause —*lowered vitality*. On such a ground arose the teachers of a season, who sung their dirges and laid themselves down to die, leaving behind ferment in the deteriorating mass which even a Shri Krishna was unable to check. It is an instructive study to watch this evolution of the diametrically opposed conclusions of the earlier optimism and the later pessimism from the same philosophical postulates, guided in the one case by vigorous youthful vitality, and in the other by the *blase* feeling produced by lowered race-vitality. Of course, philosophy reconciles the two, as facts, by saying that the *Karma-Kanda* belongs and corresponds to the Pravrittimarga, the path of pursuit, and the first two "stages" or "orders" of the individual life, *viz.*, the student and the house-holder, and the Jnana-Kanda to the Nivritti-marga, the Path of Renunciation and the two stages of the second half of life, *viz.*, the "retired sacrificer" (called technically forest-dweller) and the hermit. This is only another way of expressing the biological truth that, whether in the life of the race or the individual, old age and death are *facts*, and also that as parents are 'reborn' in their children, so are races 'reborn' in their successors. Therefore it is our bounden duty to bring to our ill-fed, ill-clad, ill-housed ill-taught masses the high degree of health, physical and mental, which would rejuvenate the race, bring back optimism, and once again, as in the legendary Satyayuga, make living a joy.

The scope of the work :—By the very nature of the subject this book attempts to tackle, it disclaims all pretence of being pure, unadulterated "ancient religion," Sanatana Dharma. For to do that it must confine itself to some one special limited period and thus create an *artificial* atmosphere for a pedant to live in and ignore the *living* religion, which has been ever shifting and changing. As the work has been composed for the practical purpose of influencing Hindu practices and beliefs in the future, I have naturally refrained from the task of the mere dry-as-dust historian. The work, like the living subject it deals with, is therefore naturally a blend of the past and present practices of Hinduism ; and in deducing lessons from these, it attempts to point out the lines of advance by working on which the 'practice' might be safely and profitably remodelled and brought into effective harmony with the newer condition of things. But as this aspect of the work could not be properly understood without reference to the tenets and practices of the religion, the necessary historical setting has had to be provided.

I have refrained from giving quotations and citing authorities for every statement made, for the simple reason that the book is not meant for the use of mere scholars, delvers in things antiquarian, but for the practical purpose of appealing to large classes of men. Citations would have unnecessarily added to the bulk of the book. The work is a compilation, and " learned lumber " would have defeated its purpose by driving away the average reader. Authorities are therefore seldom given and quotations not always marked.

But though largely a compilation, it is not merely a compact and handy *rechauffe* of current views, for popular consumption. It attempts an application of old ideas to new forms and tries to point out the want of these in many a popular belief and observance, besides exposing many an inconsistency in our daily practice.

A Hand-Book for progressives :—In the attempt to throw some light on the hopes and aspirations animating Hindu "Young India," the book, of necessity, has become a sort of "handbook" for progressives and reformers, focussing the suggestions and discussions on the subject. While doing this, the needs of that large class of people, who wish to know something about the huge mass of Sanskrit religion-social literature-beginning with the Vedic Samhitas and coming right down to our own times—have also been borne in mind and supplied to some extent. The suggestions here thrown out are, of course, merely tentative; they are meant primarily to rouse the people and help them to diagnose the case and apply the necessary remedies; they are not put forward in the spirit of the *dogmatic obiter dicta* of an empiric to be followed implicitly with blind, unreasoning faith, of which, alas! India has ever had a plethora—but only as helps towards an ultimate solution of the problem.

It is because I have abiding faith in the possibilities of Hindu culture coming out triumphant from this searching ordeal, that I have attempted to take stock of the situation.

I desire to point out, therefore, that the work has been written under a very great sense of responsibility, and has caused much searching of heart, in the fear lest a mistake might have been made and a healthy condition taken for a pathological one. Chances of error have been eliminated as far as it lay in the writer's power to do so; and defects have been pointed out and remedies proposed in the spirit of reverence that is due when dealing with such a religio-social organism as ours, hoary with untold age.

It may be felt by some readers of this book that while the defects in our religio-social organism have been dwelt upon largely, no counter-balancing recognition of the great and good things in it is shown. It would be a fatal mistake to pour in salves when the surgeon's sharp knife is the only remedy for the cancerous growths of many centuries. The defects dwelt upon have not been so dealt with for the mere pleasure of exhibiting the sores for the delectation of unsympathetic outsiders, but for the grave purpose of opening the eyes of my Hindu brothers so that there may be no excuse left for them to remain supine, heedless of the terrible times ahead if they fail to bestir themselves.

That the organism has become diseased almost to the very core is a fact admitted by all Hindus, irrespective of their special creed or caste. The nauseating bolus has to be swallowed to purge it of its poisonous humours; the gangrened limb has to be amputated if the life of the patient is to be saved. It is a criminal and short-sighted love which shuts its eyes to this terrible condition and tries to conserve everything as it is. When the poisonous stuff clogging the flow of healthy life in the organism has been purged away, that life will flow through all parts of itself, and revive and restore and remanifest the beauties that are inherent in them.

Covering as the book does a large field, an adequate canvas was necessary to do justice to the subjects dealt with in it; but the necessity of not frightening away the average reader was paramount. This exigency of space alone is the reason for the somewhat dogmatic tone here and there of the book. I am not so vain as to regard my views on any particular subject as being the last thing that could be said about it.

Another rather important point in this connection ought to be borne in mind. It is this. In a work of this popular character, where brevity with clearness is indispensible, it is inadvisable to be constantly expressing hesitation and deference. Such a procedure not only tends to obscure the points, but produces a most uncomfortable feeling of "wobble." The conclusions are meant to be suggestive, to promote discussion and awaken thought. If the endeavour to awaken is rude sometimes, it is not for the gratuitous pleasure of mere rudeness, but because the slumber is so profound that a rough shaking has become necessary; and I would request all my Hindu brethren to forget the very many shortcomings of the performance and think only of the good-will behind it.

Interpretation of rites and ceremonials :—It may be urged by the orthodox that I have not given always *their* explanations of old rites and ceremonials, but such as are sometimes strange to them. My answer is that there is no such thing as a well-defined and universally accepted orthodox position with regard to these matters. Hindu religious practices have existed for so long a stretch of time and over so vast an area, that one is lost in a maze when attempting the quixotic feat of fixing what is orthodoxy and what is not. The fluid nature of the polity makes such an undertaking impossible. The only possible way then left,—and I must say the only right way—is to deal with the questions in a critical and historical spirit. The modern revivalist movements have unfortunately done very little to encourage this spirit of critical and historical enquiry in matters of faith and of practice; but on the contrary have stimulated the morbid love of the Hindu for the supernatural which has been sapping the vigour of his intellect and his character for many hundreds of years now.

The present work attempts to trace the history of some of the Hindu ceremonials and rituals of to-day, by quotation of concrete instances from the Vedic down to our own times. It is hoped that this endeavour to throw critical light on some of the most important beliefs and practices will show the new way of dealing with them, a way, which, so far as I am aware, has not been utilised by my countrymen. European methods of meticulous accuracy, of infinite patience in research, and deep scholarship, are known to few of us and practised by still fewer.

What may be hoped for :—Vast collective causes have brought about the present state of things and only by vast collective causes can they be changed. What can however be rationally required and is required, of the congeries of races and faiths inhabiting India and unified by Hinduism, is not a preliminary and absolute, but only a gradual and progressive, giving up of prejudices. My hope is that efforts like this one of mine might prove to be the beginnings, the trickling tiny stream at Gangotri of mother Ganga, to be augmented by many another similar stream and to become gradually a mighty river sweeping away all barriers before its onrush, and leaving behind the fertilising influences which nourish the whole watershed.

It is not by isolated efforts that this is possible. The movement must reach the masses, if a radical and permanent improvement is to be made. So far no organised and persistent efforts have been made to rouse them from their ignorance and lethargy. But this is being remedied fast. The masses are rapidly becoming self-conscious, and it is hoped that ideas like those put forward here will before long be brought to their doors by the many journals in the living languages of India which are beginning to minister to their needs

We must recognise the true nature of our malady, which is largely a distemper caused by this stage of transition. It is neither possible, nor would it be wise, if it were possible, to kick blindly against our present environment; but it is very necessary to recognise it whole-heartedly as at bottom a regenerating and inevitable process, and thus save ourselves much useless misery.

The one really hopeful force at work, which may save the situation, is the steady unrelenting pressure from outside. 'Adapt or perish' are the only two alternatives allowed. The English domination of the country has forced us into contact with modern civilisation which is moulding us on cosmopolitan lines, much to our good, so far as the narrowing and intellect-deadening effects of "orthodoxy" are concerned. For, however pledged to religious neutrality the British Government may be, it is by its very genius, as well as by the force of circumstances, actively if indirectly undermining ignorance and superstition. This effect of the new education is causing great resentment and a vast inchoate dread. The element of truth in it is the danger that the new broom may sweep away not only the rubbish of superstitions, but also the gold of true religion, of philosophy, of genuine Dharma and Achara, hidden underneath. The result of the whole process, many of us however believe, will be the purification of the great mass under the heat generated by the dread and resentment on the one side, and the hammer strokes of the environment on the other. For my part I am not at all perturbed at the fire of the catastrophes, which has been melting down, during the last hundred years and more, the old-world polity, and attempting, though rather blindly, to produce a new one. A new order of things for India is obviously willed by Providence, by its bringing together of East and West.

The cause of unrest :—The highly prepotent and aggressive civilisation of the English, coming into direct and incessant *conflict in every* sphere of thought and of action with this old-world polity—proud of a glorious past, cherishing tenaciously illusions of its ability to revivify it, contemptuous of everything outside its own pale, well-skilled in all the arts of passive resistance, learnt but too-well in the bitter and humiliating school of religious and political subjection through long centuries of oppression at the hands of barbarian hordes from the North,—this conflict is the main cause of the unrest and upheaval in the country, of which we see so much in these days. It is not merely political; it is equally economic, social, intellectual, religious, and moral. It is due not to temporary or superficial causes, but to this deep-seated reason, that people are becoming once more alive with new sensations, and are trying to grope their way from what they now feel to be darkness into the old or a new light.

The new-born individualism is striving for freedom,—not only from the trammels of a historical religion,—but is also attempting to grasp power all round, so as to secure room for a full expansion of all its latent powers. In their preliminary dimness of vision, the people cannot distinguish friend from foe, right from wrong. In their blind dislike and fear of things western the swing of the pendulum has brought a reactionary mood, and produced the "gush" over things eastern which we hope will pass off to give place to equilibrium, balance and sanity.

The coming Humanist nationalism :—But a day is soon approaching when there will be light, and the brooding monsters of darkness laid low. We are privileged to watch the coming into existence of a new nationality—the Indian Nation—which, if it succeeds in separating its ancient gold from the accreted dross will be more Humanist than Nationalist. Untold agonies have to be suffered before such an event fraught with immense possibilities comes into existence. There may be some who are constantly croaking against the possibility of such an event, on grounds of differences of religion and language or of race etc. But neither mere sameness of religion or of language or of race are cohesive forces, nor are the differences of Race, Language, and Religion divisive forces by themselves. One has only to look at other countries and states to see the truth of this at once. Great Britain, France, Germany, Switzerland, Russia, United States of America—each is a congeries of races, languages and religions. The Indian Muslim is but a despised

“ Hindi ” to his “ brother ” of Arabia. The factor of mere “ descent ” is being pushed more and more into the background. Local proximity, subjection to one general law, allegiance to one distant “ sovereign,” territorial patriotism (as it has been called latterly), modification of ignorance-born separative prejudices, and finally the intense wish—born of many causes—for unification, are all tending towards that happy event, however long delayed it may be.

Kashi the best centre for the new light :—What better place, then, for such a work as this, than Kashi, the uncrowned capital of Hinduism, the centre of all its radiating influences, from generation to generation, for thousands of years ; where Buddha preached his first sermon two thousand five hundred years ago ; where again two thousand years later, and under far different conditions, the saintly Kabir preached amity and brotherliness between Hindu and Mussalman ; where he preached the way to salvation, like his great predecessor, through wisdom and lowly charity, and fearlessly denounced caste hierarchies and rituals, whether Islamic or Vedic, instead of trying to delude ignorance still further—as unhappily many sects of revivalists are now trying to do, each claiming omniscience and exclusive possession of esoteric truth, and inventing all kinds of stories, about which no trustworthy and unmistakable records or other proofs are available From this Kashi even to-day emanate all *vyavasthas*, *responsa prudentum*, pronouncements for the guidance of the religio-social life of this great but slumbering people. Here also in a sense the darkness is greatest too, as proverbially under the lamp. Who can then point out better than the observers in Kashi, the watchers in the crow's nest, the rocks and shoals ahead, or advise the steersman how to point the vessel's prow to safer channels?

There are wise and great men in Kashi, but they have gone to sleep, and if this 'splash' of mine in the stagnant waters of Hinduism wakes them from their sleep of Muchukunda (the Hindu Rip van Winkle, but, significantly, to waken whom meant death to the awakener), this work will have served its purpose, and the progress of the country and the nation assured. Mistakes there must be, but they do not affect the main trend of the work, which is to rouse slumberers to the danger, and not to appeal to the mere scholar and the antiquary. When the soul of a whole people cries out aloud for help against the manifold miseries of soul and body into which it has been misled and deluded by the corruptness of the guides it had trusted, when it so cries out through the mouths of representatives first, now here and now there, then gradually the cry spreads, and in response to it, a new Dharma spreads over the earth.

The Bhagavata Dharma :—Such I conceive to have been the beginning of the famous *Bhagavata dharma* whose supreme embodiment was the Bhagavan Krishna of the Bhagavad-Gita and the Mahabharata, rather than that of the *Bhagavata Purana.* This Bhagavata-Dharma, in which the principle of the assiduous performance of duty has had its fullest development, is not the product of Christian influences, but of movements long anterior to the birth of the Christian religion. Ever since the days of the Pancharatras and the Gita, this highest product of our religion has ever been with us, being constantly developed and amplified by an unbroken succession of saints, from the North and the South, from the East and the West, of this Bharata Varsha, saints belonging to every 'caste' and every 'race' and transcending such earthly limitations by the fire and fervour of their spiritual zeal. This movement, *in one of its aspects*, was a strenuous protest against the Vedic Dharma of blood-sacrifices and all that it stood for, while in another aspect it was a reassertion of the optimism of the Vedas, a call to live the fuller life, the life of *duty* utterly fulfilled; the life of strife and of battle with all that is wrong and usurping. Krishna's ringing words on the field of Kurukshetra are 'stand up and fight,' and not 'go and become a Sadhu.'

This long-drawn struggle between the letter of the law as against its spirit—this struggle against the degeneration of self-sacrifice into the vicarious sacrifice of animals—is not properly taken account of by the foreign student, and indeed, less by the professional indigenous Pandits and Shastris. But ever since the days of the revelation of the Gita by Krishna to Arjuna—his 'other' self—on the field of Kurukshetra, there never has been a break in the tradition, and the world-ringing promise uttered on the memorable battle-field has been literally fulfilled, and India has never been left disconsolate, and in the dark, for want of redeemers. The spirit of Krishna has been born again and again, times unnumbered, for the guidance of the tottering feet of his children and the upholding of the Dharma—though alas! the band of faithful disciples who would uphold the banner of faith and of righteousness has always been small.

The rapidity and completeness of the spread of the Bhagavata reformation are largely due to the dominance of an aggressively hostile faith between the eighth and the eighteenth century. But for that same reason it took on a character diametrically opposed to the teachings of Krishna. It was no more "get up and fight"; but of resignation and obedience to the "will of God." It was passive resistance, in the sphere of religious and social life, offered to irresistible physical force. It evolved of sheer necessity the humanitarian teaching of human brotherhood as against the ritualism of the Shruti and the Smriti:—

जात पांत पूछे नहि कोई ।
हरि को भजै सो हरि का होई ॥

"If you are a devotee of Hari, nobody asks your caste; you are of the elect and a brother in God."

It made of Ishvara a personal extra-cosmic God, as against the teachings of all the six schools of orthodox philosophy and of Jainism and Buddhism. It made of Atma an everlasting distinct individuality.

It made of Mukti a state of peculiar bliss enjoyed by being ever in the presence of the Lord. All that is good in this is to be assiduously nourished, and all that is bad to be equally carefully weeded out. One exceedingly mischievous product of this reformation is the horde of Gurus spread broad-cast over the hapless country. There are the 40 or 50 lakhs of Sadhus recruited from all castes, and another 60 or 70 lakhs of householder Brahmins, almost a crore of Gurus for about 20 crores of Hindu Chelas! A Guru is not unnecessary or superfluous, provided he is of the right type who can serve as an example, as an *incitant* to overcome the unacknowledged, but very real, underlying scepticism and inertia towards affairs of the spirit. The Guru is not wanted so much as a teacher, but very much as a catalytic agent to rouse the Heliotropic orientation of the Soul and make it bathe itself in the purifying fire. But can this be said of even a hundred among this crore of teachers?

Our Duty :—We must revitalise ourselves, create a standard of not 'high' but 'refined' living, learn to live fuller, healthier, more *natural* lives, and put firmly aside the deadly notion that the *ideal* of inaction is the highest for a nation as a whole, without regard to time, place and circumstances. It is the doughty fighter in life's battle who safely crosses the ocean of *Samsara* and not the cross-legged weakling. Not by being afraid and avoiding danger, is danger surmounted, but by facing it manfully and overcoming its strength by the putting forth of one's own. If after effort made, success does not come, then proper consolation may be found in the thought that other forces, or circumstances, or our *pratibandhaka purva karma, i.e.*, our own previous sins and our consequent disabilities which now make obstacles in our way to success, have prevailed against us, and that we should prepare better and strive anew, in the firm belief that sincere effort is never wasted. As the *Gita* says:

नेहाभिक्रमनाशोऽस्ति प्रत्यबायो न विद्यते ।
स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् ॥

"Right effort is never lost, and leads to us ill consequences
Even a little virtue wardeth off much danger." And

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways."

॥ ॐ ॥

" May all cross safely beyond the difficult places in life
May all see happy days;
May all attain right knowledge;
May all rejoice Everywhere."

सर्वस्तरतु दुर्गाणि सर्वो भद्राणि पश्यतु ।
सर्वस्सद्बुद्धिमाप्नोतु सर्वस्सर्वत्रनन्दतु ॥

॥ ॐ ॥

PART I.

A History of the Chief Sanskrit Sacred Books of the Hindus and of their Principal Teachings.

युक्तियुक्तमुपादेयं वचनं बालकादपि ।
अन्यत्तृणमिव त्याज्यमप्युक्तं पद्मजन्मना ॥

योगवासिष्ठ.

Accept the truth well-reasoned out
That e'en a child might say,
All else, though spoke by Brahma's self,
As rubbish cast away.

Yoga-Vasishtha.

पुराणमित्येव न साधु सर्वं
न चापि काव्यं नवमित्यवद्यम् ।
सन्तः परीक्ष्यान्यतरद्भजन्ते
मूढः परप्रत्ययनेयबुद्धिः ॥

कालिदास.

'Tis old ! Therefore it must be right,
'Tis new ! It must be wrong ;
So sayeth but the witless wight
By others led along ;
But judging both with Reason's eyes,
They ever choose who are the wise.

Kali-Das.

CHAPTER I.

Definition and Sources of Hinduism:—Section 1.

THOUGH it may be necessary at the very outset to ask What is Hinduism and what are its sources, and attempt an answer, all those who have tried the task know how hopeless it is. No definition is possible, for the very good reason that Hinduism is absolutely *indefinite*. It is really an Anthropological process to which, by a strange irony of fate, the name of 'religion' has been given. Starting from the Vedas, embodying the customs and ideas of one or a few tribes, it has like a snow-ball gone on ever getting bigger and bigger in the course of ages, as it has steadily gone on absorbing from the customs and ideas of all peoples with whom it has come into contact, down even to the present day. It rejects nothing. It is all-comprehensive, all-absorbing, all-tolerant, all-complacent, all-compliant. Every type of mind can derive nourishment from it. It has its spiritual and its material, its esoteric and exoteric, its subjective and objective, its rational and irrational, its pure and impure aspects. It may be compared to a huge irregular multilateral figure. One side for the practical, another for the severely moral, another for the devotional and the imaginative, another for the supremely ascetic, another for the sensuous and the sensual—even the downright carnal—and another for the philosopher and the speculative.

Those who seek rest in ceremonial observances find it all-sufficient ; those who deny the efficacy of works, and make faith the one requisite, need not wander from its pale ; those who are ascetic-minded find its Yoga-rules all-satisfying ; those addicted to sense-gratification—whether fine or coarse—can gratify their tastes without outraging the sentiment of the average Hindu ; those who delight in meditating on the nature of man, on the existence or non-existence of God or Soul, or matter or spirit, or the origin of evil, may indulge their love of sepculation to the utmost possible. And it is because of this capacity of endless expansion that there exist in it endless sectarian divisions even among the followers of any one particular line of doctrine. It is because of its ever-expanding elastic and variable nature, and its all-embracing receptivity, that I have called it above an Anthropological process rather than a religion. It will be realised how impossible ordinarily, is an accurate definition of a thing of such Protean shape. It may be possible, perhaps, by an Encyclopædic treatment of the subject, taking into account the totality of beliefs and customs and their myriad transformations from the very dawn of the Vedic Polity down to our own times.

In this land of anomalies, (because it declines to conform to any preconceived *normus* of any Orientalist) the very words Hinduism, Hindu, Hindustan have no place in Sanskrit books, whether ancient or modern. The oldest trace we have of the beginnings of these words are in the sacred literature of the Parsis. In the Avesta and its commentary, the Zend, the word is to be met with as the Hapta-Hindu, which is but the phonetically changed form of the Sapta-Sindhu of the Vedas. It always occurs in its plural form Sapta-Sindhavah and while everywhere it refers to the "seven rivers" themselves, in one place in the Rig Veda (VIII, 24, 27) it is the designation of a definite country. Orientalists identify this country with the modern Punjab. But there are two insuperable difficulties in the way. One is that the identification of the seven rivers is still a controversial point, and the second is the transformation of the *Sapta*, seven, into *Pancha*, five. No phonetic jugglery is possible here, and to dismiss the difficulty by remarking airily that no stress on identification need be laid because 'seven' is a favourite or sacred number from the days of the Vedas onwards up to now, does not sound very scholarly. The word is again found in use among the Greeks and was then taken over by the Musalman conquerors of India, and made current. The word Hindavah, plural of Hindu, is found in a copper-plate inscription of the 12th century.

Tradition says that the early Musalman raiders into India used the word Hindu as a synonym for slave. It seems that the word has undergone changes similar to the words Dasa and Musalman. The former word in Vedic language means an enemy, then a conquered enemy, then a slave, finally now one who has or had been dedicated to some God or Goddess. The latter word according to Prof. D. S. Margoliouth, has had similar changes of meaning with the progressive changes in the wider and wider acceptance of the religion. The word Maslamah means hypocrite in Hebrew and heathen in Syriac; while Islam means a traitor, one who has handed over his friends to their enemies. It finally came to mean one who handed over himself to God. (Margoliouth's "Muhammad" p. 116). He also gives a conjecture of his own (p. 81) based on a tradition that Muhammad was a disciple of Maslamah or Masailimah of Yemamah, who also had claimed to be a messenger from God, that it was from this teacher's name that the new religion was given its name by unbelievers. The name Hindu has been accepted now by the people themselves, who are so designated, with this reservation, however, that it is limited to certain of its peoples only. In Arabia the original meaning still continues. There any persona irrespective of his religion, from Hind is Hindi (and the language or languages of the country Hindavi) as from Rum, Rumi or Faras, Farasi. But whatever the origin of the word may be, it is too firmly rooted in the soil to be gotten rid of by the fanatical attempts of would-be purists. Besides, it answers to a definite need. It is comprehensive enough to indicate the whole range of that Anthropological process, which is modern Hinduism, from the highest Metaphysic to the crudest Animism; from endless banal ritualism to its almost complete absence.

This vast inchoate mass of heterogeneous ideas and practices,—subsisting side by side, in strange medley and conjunction, and not in separate water-tight exclusive compartments, and forming an ill-defined, confused, unco-ordinated, sometimes mutually hostile and destructive elements of a huge conglomerate—is the faith of two hundred and fifty millions of Hindus: and it can never be indicated by any of those high-sounding Sanskrit words which are so dear to the revivalist, and yet are all new coinages. The ancient books give no name to the religion. These modern inventions—Sanatana Dharma; Vaidika Dharma; Arya Dharma; Arsha Dharma; Varna and Ashrama Dharma; Shashvata Dharma and so on—are all inaccurate, for they are all of incomplete connotation, indicating, as they do, only certain phases of this all-comprehensive polity. Further the use of each is confined to that small group only which is responsible for its birth. Nor will the English coinage Brahminism do; for its limitations are obvious. Let us then not try to discard and despise this wonderfully comprehensive word, but make it into a thing of honour and worship and thus crystalise round it, in the times that are coming, the gleaming patriotism of a united people.

It would not be futile now, after, all that has been said above, to indicate, though somewhat briefly and crudely, what Hinduism is. There should be no danger of misunderstanding now. What follows will largely be only a repetition, in other and more concrete ways, of what has been said above in a generalised, abstract fashion. I shall attempt to point out below that there is no one belief, and no single practice which is indispensable, and that Hinduism, unlike all other existing religions, is not cribbed and confined between the narrow walls of creeds and dogmas, but is free and untramelled, and has within it powers of indefinite expansion.

Let us deal with the tests one by one now.

(a) Birth from Hindu parents is not necessary to make one a Hindu.. *Vide* the ancient practice of the *vratyastoma*, by which not only individuals but whole tribes were absorbed into Hinduism; as also the comparatively modern practices of the various sects, for instance, the Sikhs, the Arya Samajists, the Chaitanya Vaishnavas, the Radha Swamis, the Kabir-Panthis etc., etc. I would certainly put in Buddhism here also, for is it not an offshoot of Hinduism, a protestant reformation against the tyranny of birth and of bloody sacrifices? Krishna in the Gita claims as his own not only the oppressed classes—women, Vaishyas and Shudras—but even those of unclean descent (papa Yonayah) :—

मांहि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपिस्युः पापयोनयः ।
स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यांति परांगतिम् ॥

Who these *papa yonayah*, of unclean descent, are, is cleared up by the Bhagavata. It mentions Kiratas, Hunas, Andhras, Pulindas, Pukkasas, Abhiras, Kankas, Yavans, Khasas and (getting tired of enumerating each one of these separately, the writer puts in an all embracing phrase "and all other such unclean ones:—"

किरातहूणान्ध्रपुलिन्दपुक्कसाः आभीरकंका यवनाः खसादयः ।
येऽन्येच पापा यदुपाश्रयाश्रयाच्छुध्यन्ति तस्मै प्रभविष्णवेनमः ॥

(b) Birth within the geographical limits of India is not necessary. Thousands of children are born every year in the far distant countries and islands of the world to emigrant Hindus. No sane person would deny these the right to be called Hindus.

(c) Belief in the Vedas is not necessary. The Gita repudiates them in very strong language. The Charvakas make merciless fun of them, dubbing them as "the works of buffoons, lunatics and Pishachas." The Jainas, the Sikhs, and many other indisputably Hindu sects, reject them. Whatever may be the feeling or faith of orthodoxy to-day or of the last five hundred years or so, with regard to Buddhism, it was regarded by an earlier age as a form of Hinduism, and 'conversions,' to and fro were quite free till so late as 1000 A. D., Archaeology and History are there to prove it. Between the Sikh, Saraswat, Khattri, and Jat, and Jain Agarwal on the one hand, and their Hindu caste fellows on the other, there is free inter-marriage to-day, even in such a centre of orthodoxy and bigoted Brahmanism as Benares. Further the Vedas are no authority for the Shudras and those still lower. 'Hinduism' was in existence long before the composition of the Vedas, which are only a very much rationalised literary expression of a pre-existing condition of things. *Vide*, the assertion of the Atharva Veda that "the Vedas are only the Uchchhista, the leavings of the Sacrifices." If this has any meaning, it can only mean that the Sacrifices, with all their paraphernalia had been in existence long before the necessity of giving a literary setting to them arose. (The origin of the Vedas will be discussed in a later chapter, when all the evidence for the above bald statement will be marshalled). Hinduism does not stand or fall by the Vedas. If it had, it would have been dead long ago, ground between the upper and the nether millstones of the absurdities and self-contradictions of the exegetes from the days of the Brahmanas (the so named texts) down to quite modern times on the one side, and the Godeschewing, mutually exclusive, and hostile orthodox (astika) philosophies on the other. Even more potent than Buddha and Mahavira have been the teachings of Vedanta in the destruction of the Vedic religion of Yajna.

(d) Belief in and practice of the caste system is not necessary. The Sadhus, Sannyasis, Bairagis, Udasis, etc., all repudiate caste, as do also the many dissenting sects, the Jangamas or Lingayats, Sikhs, Brahmos etc.

(e) Belief in the sanctity of the cow and Brahmana is not necessary. The 'untouchable Hindus' have no objection to eating beef: and, on the other hand even such low castes as the Bind, the Gaderia etc., will not take even boiled milk from the hands of a Brahmana, though he be a Shankaracharya. In fact, they coolly repay him in his own coin, for no high-caste Hindu takes even water from the hands of such people.

(f) Belief in God is not necessary; seeing that with the sole exception of the Yoga, which is a very late work, none of the other five 'orthodox' systems of thought, in their original form, recognise an extra-cosmic creator—a God,—not even that pivot of orthodoxy—the Mimansa. And even in the Yoga system, such a personal God is only a valuable *alternative* means of attaining *Samadhi*, not a necessity.

(g) The Shikha,—the top-knot of hair, is not necessary. Not only the ascetics (sanyasis) get rid of it, but large classes of Hindus who are not ascetics do not keep it. While the English educated Hindu youth belonging to the Shikha—keeping classes, are beginning to discard it.

(h) The 'Sacred thread' is not necessary. It is the privilege of only the Brahmanas and there are millions of Kshatriyas and Vaishyas who do not wear it. While the lower castes and 'caste-less' cannot wear it. The sanyasis give it up, and withal are higher in the social scale than the Brahmanas. Nor do many other very large orders of Hindu ascetics, Udasis, Bairagis etc., wear it. On the other hand, the *tridandi sanyasis* wear both Shikha and Upavita. Old vedic literature would indicate that the thread was worn only on special occasions, and was not a constant companion of even the Brahmana.

(i) Rules as to lawful and forbidden foods and drinks are widely different. What is unlawful to one is quite lawful to another.

(j) No rites and sacraments are indispensable. They are largely communal matters, and even, within the community, a large amount of laxity, with regard to their non-observance, is tacitly permitted. The vast majority of Hindus being outside the pale of the three higher castes can have no such things at all, as a matter of right and duty. According to Deccani Brahmanas, there are only Brahmanas and Shudras left to-day, it is only a handful of Hindus *i. e.*, the Brahmanas, therefore, on whom this rule of sacraments would be binding. Thus not even marriage is a sacrament for any but the Brahmanas; for the others it is only a civil marriage, legalised concubinage.

(k) Belief neither in Karma, nor soul, nor reincarnation is necessary. Belief in 'Karma,' in some sort of reward and retribution, is common to all mankind; and is not the exclusive possession of the 'Hindu;' but amongst Hindus, as elsewhere, there are some who definitely reject Karma, even an immortal *soul* is not accepted by all. Reincarnation, even when recognised, is admitted sometimes in a very crude form. There are many forms of the beliefs therein.

(l) Belief in Avataras is not necessary, nor special, to Hinduism. It will probably come as a surprise to most people to be told that the Khoja followers of the Aga Khan recognise the ten Avataras of the Hindus—only replacing the Kalki by Ali, (*vide* ir Roland Wilson's 'Digest of Anglo-Mohamedan Law),' and also believing the head, for the time being, of the community, to be an Avatara. Professor Anandashankara Bappubhai Dhruva Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the Benares Hindu University has kindly supplied me with some more information from the "Satpantha Shastra" a Gujerati book in verse transcribed from a manuscript in Sindhi scripts, written for the use of the Aga Khanis *i.e.* the Khojas, it is also known as "Athar Veda." The work is a collection under one cover of the work of many "Pirs" There is one long poem in it by Pir Imam Shah known as the "Dashavatara Moto" in ten cantos, each devoted to one Avatar, In this, Muhammad is said to be an incarnation of Hari as also of Brahma; and the corresponding Daitya is one कालिंगो (Kalingo). This is evidently some unidentified opponent and oppressor of Muhammad. `A few lines from the original are given below.

आज ब्रह्माजी ते सहों नवी महम्मद धराव्या नाम
आज ईश्वरते आदम कलजुग माहे सार
आज कलजुग मां हरि नुं दसमुं अवतार
ते आज दसमें हरि पात्रन कलंकी अवतार
ते आज बेठाले अरबदेश मींजार

Further on Ali is also said to be the incarnation of Vishnu.

अली किरतार विष्णु कहिये
नबी महम्मद ब्रह्माजी तुं अवतार

(m) That the caste organisation is *tribal*, and has precious little to do with the artificial logic-ridden theories of the books, is well brought out by the rules as to interdining and intermarriage. According to the Census Reports there are eighteen hundred odd species under the genus Brahmana, which neither interdine, nor intermarry. If the book-lore had been based on facts, such a monstrous state of things would not have been so persistently in evidence. The very lowest castes refuse to admit within their pale all outsiders, whatever their caste status may be. It is not regarded as an honour for a lower or different sub-caste woman to be "married" outside her pale.

(n) The criterion of the application of "Hindu Law" will not hold. Not only is the law unreasonably divergent in matters of Inheritance and Adoption, it is worse still in matters of marriage. What is regarded as downright incest in one class is not only permitted, but is regarded as quite the thing among the other classes; for instance, the marriages of maternal uncles with their nieces, or of maternal cousins (*Vide* Mandlik's "Hindu Law"). Further, personal Hindu Law is administered to Musalmans also on the Bombay side by the courts, as a reference to the law Reports will easily show.

(o) Race and color are no criteria. Every Ethnic variety—from the fairest to the darkest, from the most brachycephalic to the most dolichocephalic, from the most retreating jaw to the most snouty, from the flatest and broadest to the straightest and thinest and highest nose—is to be found among the people now known as 'Hindu.' To persons interested in this branch of investigation, I can strongly recommend the work in the Contemporary Science Series "The Jews."

The result of the above brief and rather crude examination of facts, as against the theories of the books, brings out clearly the truth of the contention that any and every one is a Hindu (1) who does not repudiate that designation; or better still, because more positive, who says he is a Hindu, and (2) accepts *any* of the *many* beliefs, and *follows* any of the many practices that are *anywhere* regarded as Hindu. We see that it all ultimately comes to a *name*. The vital difference being that while all other religions are indissolubly bound up with the names of their Founders, this is not, having no individual founder. And it would be well to leave it in its indefiniteness and not to attempt a too rigid demarcation of boundaries. Such a procedure would be a death-blow to it. As it is, it has infinite grades of possibilities in it. It may in the future enwrap within its tenuous folds even such aggressive religions as Christianity and Islam. That this is not a mere wild chimera would be apparent to any one who has studied the work done by Kabir and Nanak. There is no reason why some day there should not be found chapters, missing now in the available copies of the Skanda or the Bhavishya Purana describing (1) the Avatara of Isha-Krishta or Isha-Putra, as the object of the special worship of the sect of the Hindus known as Krishchana Hindus, and their special tirthas as the river Jardaṇa and hill Kalwara-parvata; and (2) the birth of the Rishi Mahamada or Mahamoda and his foundation of the sect called Muslima Hindus with their special tirthas in the Kabeshvara Temple and the Zam-zam-kunda.

Hinduism refuses none, but embraces all within its soft, plastic, loving folds. It suits itself to every mood and temperament. It has directions for every stage of human development. There is room in it and guidance available for, from the mere " animal " man to the most saintly. That it has been steadily developing and altering, these hundreds and thousands of years, no one, who does not deliberately close his eyes to his surroundings and to the lessons of history can deny. Though in its beginnings as rigid, as narrow, as exclusive, as non-cosmopolitan, as the Hebrew religion, meant only for the elect, a sort of hereditary entailed family property, it has from these very beginnings also possessed the germs of a philosophic, cosmopolitan life in it. It soon grew out of its tribal limitations. While economic and geographical conditions helped to expand Vedism, in the course of ages, by providing a fertile soil to the germs of philosophy in it, into a Manava-Dharma—" the whole duty of man ",—that is, to repeat again, made of it an Anthropological process; similar causes, working in another way, made Hebraism, by its rejection of Christianity, continue in its early, tribal, stunted, circumscribed stage. Once set free, Hinduism expanded and grew ever stronger. It survived, where so many other better organised and more closely and rigidly knit organisations have fallen to pieces and disappeared, *because* of its adaptability, its fluidity. If any say that only such and such ritual, or such and such dogma, is Hinduism, he can be safely told that he errs. Does not *Manu* say,—and what orthodoxy can question his authority—that adaptation to environment is the truest following of Dharma. *Desha* and *Kala* and *Nimitta* place and time and circumstance, have ever to be taken into account by persons working for righteousness. This is in full consonance with the biological theory of change and progress. Adapt or perish is the immutable law of nature.

Manu Says:—

अन्ये कृतयुगे धर्मास्त्रेतायां द्वापरेऽपरे ।
अन्ये कलियुगे नृणां युगह्रासानुरूपतः ॥

and this is the key-note not only of all our Dharma-Shastras. but of all our Shastras. Shankaracharya in his Shariraka Bhashya has voiced it in unmistakable terms:—

यस्मिन्देशे काले निमित्ते च यो धर्मोऽनुष्ठीयेत,
स एव देश कालनिमित्तांतरेष्वधर्मों भवति ॥

(III. I. 25)

I trust I have now justified my calling this polity an Anthropological process rather than a religion, as that word is used to-day. The Universe-embracing Virata Rupa that Krishna showed to Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra is the true embodiment and exposition of this world-including faith.

Only by such a liberal and far-seeing interpretation of Hinduism—which has, at the same time, the great merit of being historically true—will it be possible for the country to adapt itself to the terrific speed and pressure of life in this 20th Century after Christ. No spiritual progress is possible to one who has lost his self-respect, who feels himself to be a deservedly despicable creature and whose soul is so benumbed that it even resents the attempts of its, too few, genuine well-wishers to pull it into the warmth and light of the sunshine of brotherly love and individual freedom. 'I am a weak, helpless woman,' 'I am a despicable low-caste.'—Of such friable bricks no noble mansion can be built. Nor of the proud, haughty, domineering, exclusive Brahmanas and Kshatriyas. Such unshapen jagged stones refuse to fit in with others smoothly and gracefully under the hands of the Master Mason. The one has to be moulded into proper shape; the other has to be given the proper firmness. The 'high-caste' has to recognise its inherent kinship with the 'low-caste;' and the latter its right and duty to work as an *equal* if younger brother with the former. What India wants to-day has seldom been better expressed than by Burns:—

> 'The rank is but the guinea stamp
> The man's the gold for a ' that.'

Let the proud and the self-righteous Brahmanas and Kshatriyas remember that the despised Shudra and even the Chandala are also God's creatures and therefore their brothers as even the orthodox texts expressly say. Invest them with the "sacred cord," take them to your heart, give your affection to them and let them feel that they too are men and your closest helpers. The guinea should not crow over the gold merely because of its stamp. *Let the minting process be used for this gold as well.* For to-day the "sacred thread" is merely the badge of a certain social status, its real original *raison'd etre* having been lost ages ago, with the discontinuance of the Vedic polity of sacrifices. This matter will be dealt with more fully later on.

Section 2.

DEFINITION OF DHARMA: ITS ORIGIN, NATURE AND FUNCTION.

Another word, no less elusive and impossible of precise definition than Hinduism, is the all-important and ubiquitous term Dharma. There are plenty of *descriptions* of what constitutes Dharma, but nowhere in the vast range of Sanskrit works, ancient and modern, religious and secular, is an attempt made to define the term. The Mimansa could not very well shirk the task and has essayed it, but it shelters itself behind the Vedas and by limiting the scope of its task defines or describes the lakshana of Dharma as that of which Vedic injunction is the sole indicator. It has thus only re-emphasised its all-embracing purposes. A more genuine attempt may be said to be that of the atomic philosohper, the memory of whose name is only preserved in his nick-names Kanada, or Kanabhuk, or Kanabhaksha, all three meaning "atom-eater". He says—Dharma is that from which result worldly prosperity and highest good *i. e.*, deliverance from the three pains:—

आधिदैविक, आधिभौतिक, आध्यात्मिक.

and thence true knowledge.

It will be noticed how wide and all-comprehensive is this *lakshana* as put forth by this ancient philosopher, and how near it comes to making Dharma, "the whole duty of man" in its widest sense. In short it is again nothing else but the Anthropological process of the Western *Savants*. The Mahabharata frankly gives away the whole position, when it tersely says, that "The Vedas lay down injunctions which contradict each other, similar is the case with the Smritis; there is not a single Rishi whose dicta are not flatly contradicted by the dicta of other Rishis. The real essence, truth, secret of Dharma lies hid in the "cave" (the *Antahkarana*) of every well trained man, while for the average man, that is the path of Dharma, which is trodden by the leaders in conference assembled (or by the majority of the wise).

To take the word 'Mahajana,' as generally interpreted, to mean a great person, in the above verse, would be quite wrong. The word has a technical meaning,[1] which all persons familiar with its traditional use, up to now on the Gujrat side, know well. It means "a deliberative assembly" and not any individual man. In the chapters of the Viduraniti or Prajagara-Parva of the Mahabharata, in which the above verse, occurs, there are other verses where the word ' Mahajana ' is clearly used in the sense of a great assembly or association. Orthodoxy everywhere and at all times is extremely jealous and conservative and thereby unconsciously protects itself against excesses of "Individualism." How could Vyasa lay down that if one follows any great man he is on the path of Dharma? It would have been stultifying his whole life-work in one moment; the throwing down of the defences of the fort of orthodoxy and custom for those of radicalism and freedom to rampage at their sweet will within the sacred precincts, bringing desecration on all that was holy. We see then that it all ultimately means the following of customs, of usage. You must do this and must not do that, this is the essence of all Dharma. Whatever outrages tribal conscience, as fixed in its customs, is an offence, an Adharma, while all that reveres and acts up to it is praise-worthy, is Dharma. It will be realised now that it is a force of conservation and not of innovation or of Clarification. Mere preservation of what has been or has grown up quietly without overt rebellion, is its main business.

It therefore, eschews and avoids like poison all openly hostile rationalism, all efforts to bring the reasoning mind too sceptically to bear on old established customs. It, instinctively following the primordial law of self preservation, recoils from and repels all attempts to introduce individualistic liberty of conscience and freedom of action within its body, for they are disruptive forces and fatal to its life. Authoritativeness in Religion has as its handmaids, autocracy in political life and oligarchy in social. While intellectual enlightenment, not only for the privileged classes but for all, with its insistence on the rights of private judgment, of individual liberty, of freedom of conscience, means democracy in all the three spheres of religious, political and social life.

In India the latter-day Saints rung the death-knell of theology, and with it priestly privilege, by their teaching of Bhakti. These have been incessantly at work preaching and teaching that traditional dogmatism and religious ceremonials were all worthless compared to the inner experiences of the life of the soul, and that this wisdom was so far from being the monopoly of any hieratic caste that it was easier for one of humble, lowly birth to acquire it than for the stiff-necked priest, vain of his verbal learning and of his high caste. These forces have latterly been still more strengthened by the advent of the West into the East. The ferment produced by it in our political and social life is reacting on the religious also. The questioning spirit, the anathema of all priest-hoods once roused in one sphere of human activity cannot be prevented from extending its sphere into others. This has brought into existence a new kind of exegesis, namely Ecclesiastical Rationalism. This juxtaposition of thoroughly incongruous elements is most pathetic to behold. It tries to find natural explanations for the " miraculous contents of the ancient books that either revolt modern sentiment or are incapable of an intellectual explanation from the point of view of the modern student. This attempt at harmonising ancient theological thought with modern scientific thought and ethical development, can only produce a ' phantom-religion ' but no 'religion of reason' can come out of such mixing. Historical criticism is a disintegrating force on the cloud-castles of theological pretensions and symbolical exegesis.

To go back to the point under discussion namely the definition, the *lakshana,* of Dharma, and its English equivalent. If we could divorce from the word religion all the concretions that have gathered round it, that is to say, not understand it, as merely conveying the idea of a set of opinions with regard to an extra-cosmic God and his relations with man-historical and moral—which a number of people hold in common and which would be equivalent to our *Mata*—but as something very much wider, including all and every phase of human activity and regulating it—we might then translate Dharma as Religion. Dharma then may be regarded as meaning the re-action of humanity to the eternal laws of nature.

In the first stages of human development, when collectivism reigns supreme and the individual as individual is not, all emotions, all actions, are tribal, collective, done by the tribe and for the tribe as a whole. Everything bearing on human life is brought under the sphere of tribal custom. The arrangement may involve a "vicious circle." It is customary, therefore it is right, and so obligatory. It is right, because it is customary and therefore obligatory. But the logical difficulty is not felt. Increasing civilisation leads to differentiation and to individualism. From this proceeds a classification and shifting of the contents of what so long has been lumped together in one undiscriminating hotch-potch as Dharma. The separated items are each given a different label and put into their special piegon-holes.

There is no such thing as an instinct of Religion on account of which men are born religious. Nor is Religion a primary emotion. It is born out of fear and of hope. It is a compound emotion built up of the simpler emotions of admiration, awe, reverence, and these again may be resolved into self-abasement, tender emotion, wonder. It may help to a clearer understanding if the distinction between Magic and Religion and the intermixture of the latter with morality be pointed out.

In magic the attitude of the 'believer' is one of self-assertion, "my will be done"; in religion it is one of submission, of humility, "thy will be done." The business of Magic is the control of forces outside of man—irrespective of their being 'superior' or 'inferior'—but with an element of mystery in such control; while the business of Religion is the identifying of the individual human will in all humility with the cosmic will. Science differs from both. Its business is also to control the forces of nature, but with understanding and without the element of mystery. Its work lies in the work-a-day world, the region of normal commonplace calculable happenings. It deals mechanically with material things. In the earlier stages of society, there is no clear demarcating boundary between magic and religion. It is a see-saw between the two. At one moment supplicatory, next moment compelling. It cannot but be otherwise in those early days. They both belong to the super-normal world, the region of mental twilight. Both, magic and religion, are as yet congregational, and a facing of the unknown. When compulsion fails and the expected has not happened, then terror reigns supreme. Confidence must be restored somehow if the man is not to die, and Religion steps in and bids the man hope, and live. Even to-day we see how fear is an integral element of religion; we always talk of a God-fearing man, the fear of the Lord is the way of salvation; Dharma-bhiru-afraid of outraging Dharma. Because, Religion and Morality took their rise together side by side, and were always confused one with the other, therefore, even to-day it is impossible for all but a very few, to believe that a person without religion could possibly be a person with morals. Prof. A. C. Haddon in "The Study of Man" (pps. 385-387) has some very acute and illuminating remarks on this earlier conception of Magic, Religion and Morality ; so I transcribe below. He says :—

> "Primitive folk do not draw a sharp distinction between things animate and inanimate ; this is an essential fact to remember when we consider their religious beliefs and practices. The bubbling spring, the running brook, the waving boughs, the rushing wind, the burning sun, the sparkling stars, are all as much alive, as far as they can tell, as are men or animals. Man, too, feels himself weak before the forces of nature ; he by no means has subjugated nature, he does not yet possess the earth. As his forceful fellowmen have to be appeased, so must the activities outside man be appeased or interested in his favour. The appreciation of the vast unknown all around him gives origin to the feeling that it is essential for his welfare, that he should be put into friendly or harmonious relation with those powers which can benefit him and may do him harm, and so religion is born into the world."
>
> "Morality may be regarded as the acknowledgment of the claims others have on our conduct. According to this view it is the quintessence of etiquette, the habit which any particular society has found to work well in practical experience. In other words, it is the working basis of society."
>
> "Religion on the other hand, has originally nothing to do with morality—of this there is abundant proof—but it has for its aim the putting of man into harmonious relations with the forces outside him. It is how this can be accomplished and the various conceptions that have arisen concerning these outside forces, that constitute the science of comparative Religion."
>
> "We are now beginning to realise that this is the true 'inwardness' of many so called 'savage' conceptions and rituals."

Progress in knowledge lessens the number of things which used to cause fear ; so the sphere of religious worship gets progressively contracted with increasing understanding and consequent grip over the so-called supernatural. It will be clear now why the distinction between 'secular' and 'religious' which is such a prominent factor of modern consciousness, does not exist in the earlier culture.

All the later secondary meanings of the word Dharma—virtue, right, duty, good works, law, prescription, rule, correct course of conduct—are all derived from its early primary meaning of custom, Usage. The word is derived from the root Dhri, which means to uphold; physically, to prevent a man falling, to help him stand on his own legs; psychically, to restore to him his confidence in himself. So whatever thought or action that fulfils this purpose is Dharma. Manu's dictum is :—

आर्षधर्मोपदेशं तु वेदशास्त्राविरोधिना ।
यस्तर्केणानुसंधत्ते स धर्मं वेद नेतरः ॥

" Only he, and none other, knows the Dharma, who interprets the Rishis' teachings of Dharma in the light of the reason that is not in conflict with Veda-Shastra *i.e.*, Adhyatma-Shastra".

But this is debatable. For in Religion the reasoning faculties play but a very subordinate part. The sphere of religion lies all around us, in the regions which are unexplored and unmapped and, not in the domains of positive knowledge. Not the head, but the heart; emotions, not the intellect are the region of religion. Faith is the feeler that establishes some sort of a vague shadowy relation with the unknown. As knowledge advances the boundaries of the unknown steadily shrink and the sphere of religion gets ever more and more contracted. One might almost say that the two spheres of Religion and positive knowledge bear an inverse ratio to each other. It is true that we, at times gain actual practical guidance from within in some questions where experience and argument fail. But this does not make the guide necessarily reliable. Its function, as reiterated, is to energise the drooping spirits, to put enthusiasm in place of despondency; and this occasional lightening-glimmer is one due to this source alone. Religion is a very good servant but an exceedingly bad master. Its infinite liability to error and the result of such confident errors are terrible. More hideous cruelty has been practised in the name of religion than in all other names put together, by people who otherwise are exceedingly humane and sympathetic.

A few examples from daily life will make the relation between knowledge and Religion clear. Before the days of modern science it was the right and proper thing to connect a year of drought or of bumper-harvests with the sinfulness or the righteousness of the king and the tribe, and tribal expiations or thanksgiving was the order of the day. Defeat or victory in war was ascribed to similar causes. Now nobody ascribes it to the favour or disfavour of the deity. All people feel that it is not a question of religion but of material calculable things. Your general may be a vicious beast, your King an immoral drunken tyrant, but if you have better arms and ammunitions, if your soldiers are better fed and able to stand the strain better, and if your general a better tactician, then although your side may be composed of the deepest dyed villains it wins. The life of the intellect is the death of Religion. But strive as we might there is no escape from the vast uncharted ocean surrounding us. Let us then as long as possible follow resolutely the austere guidance of knowledge and conscious reason; but when these fail, we must fall back on faith. Yet let there be no mistake; no alluring will-o-the-wisp of mere emotional satisfaction should be permitted to land us in an inextricable bog. The light that draws us ever onwards should be the light of truth. The basic fact that Religion is the play-ground of emotions and from which intellect is rigidly kept out, should be steadily kept before one's eyes. This would save many very distressful heart-aches.

We have seen above that the origin of Religion is on the one hand, fear, and, on the other hand, in the trustful veneration of the unknown, whether visible or invisible, and its *function* to remove this fear and restore self-confidence and put hope in the human heart. Cardinal Newman in his magnificent ode caught the idea in a beautiful line:—

> "Be near me when my light is low."

When man's spirit is low and he is in danger of falling a victim to the assaults of pain and sorrow, there steps in religion transforming the mood of depression into one of exaltation.

It will be easier now after all the foregoing discussion to attempt to appraise the concept itself of Dharma. At the outset it shows two broad divisions, but these by insensible gradations merge into each other. For the average man Dharma means some authoritative, definite, theological 'pen' in which he finds food and protection. His hankering after *adrishtaphala*, fruit beyond human ken—incomprehensive, supernormal or at least superphysical, mysterious, and therefcre stongly desired—is satisfied without making any undue calls on the man's own powers. His powers of digestion are weak, and he does well to seek out peptonised food. The other kind of soul, strong and self-confident, abhoring regimentation and the suppression of its individuality, asks for nothing more than a free field to exercise unhampered its right divine to deal with his life in his own way. For such a man Religion does not consist of a body of destructive or obstructive dogmas, to be believed in and acted on, on peril of loss of soul. He has left behind him the fear of the priestly bogeyman for ever; worse still from the theologian's standpoint, he is always striving his best to make every son of man recognise the sacredness of human dignity and learn to stand on his own legs. For him Dharma then, in the widest and deepest conception of the term, comprises the whole *Art of Life*; it is for him the science of keeping up the organism at the highest tension possible. All that raises human nature to a higher pitch, all that enables it to reach out to a fuller life, all that which produces harmony of work between the dualism of haman nature—yoking the horse of egoism to the car of altruism—is Dharma. The taking of life seriously, the consecrating of it to noble ends, the 'energising' of the nervous system by a heightened tone of consciousness, is Dharma. But as no human being is capable of such continuous *high-pitched* excitation of the nervous system on only one key—or of even an undue prolongation of it without exhaustion and permanent loss of vitality—it comes about that life becomes a see-saw between the two forces of egoism and altruism. Exhaustion is thus prevented and the man alternating between *this*-worldliness and *other*-worldliness, goes through his appointed course of evolution, making life yield its fullest measure of self-consciousness in the course of ages.

If the Mimansaka's definition of Dharma चोदनालक्षणोऽर्थोधर्मः were shorn of its theological trammels and interpreted in its widest sense; and if it were further supplemented by the Vaisheshika's definiton of the term यतः अभ्युदयनिःश्रेयस सिद्धिः स धर्मः । the latter being also freed from all limitations of the meaning of the comprehensive word निःश्रेयस in the fourth sutra; then both the sutras read as one would mean 'that whatsoever enjoins or prohibits any actions for the purposes of securing man's good in every phase of his existence is Dharma.' It will be seen that all the above discussion of the subject is only a commentary on these two *lakshanas* intended to bring out their inmost significance by the light of the modern liberal and humanitarian spirit, accustomed to a freer, brighter and more joyous way of looking at life, rather than the narrow, gloomy, morose, pessimistic, monkish ways.

Religious evolution, like that of true art, is the result of inspiration, of the prophetic vision of seership. It refuses to be hampered by conventionality, by dogmas, by 'revealed' books. It transcends both

Law and Usage. Krishna has said in the Gita that "it is the babes that say that Sankhya and Yoga are contradictory, not the wise;" the wise recognise these to be complementary to each other. These are the two wings—Rationalism and Mysticism—which help the souls flight through the unseen. We may then say that Dharma is that which, to the processes of stimulations and Inhibitions, keeps the *Jiva* on the path of evolutionary progress towards the distant goal. What that goal is nobody has convincingly once for all, so far succeeded in saying. Sir Edwin Arnold's splendid lines in the Light of Asia, justly sum up the situation:—

> "Veil upon veil will lift—but there must be
> Veil upon veil behind."

We can realise now how insensibly 'religion,' with the cultured Hindu, gets merged into philosophic discipline, vedantic Yoga, using the words in their wide general sense and not in any narrow technical meaning. The widespread, diluted process, meant for the masses making for regimentation, suppressing individuality and not insisting on undivided devotion to any one thing or being, gets gradually supplanted by an intensive, concentrated, excluding process, demanding a highly developed individuality, and insisting on a whole-hearted devotion to one ideal. This Yoga is not concerned with the hocus-pocus of Indrajala, thaumaturgic trickery. It is, to put it in the terminology of the Experimental Psychologists of the West, a dragging out of the sub-conscious into the field of the conscious, of the subliminal into the waking, of the super-normal into the normal. It is the refusal by the soul which has begun to realise its power, to remain a passive agent in the hands of others in its own home. It is the purposeful process by which the soul takes possession of its inheritance.

The injunction of Yajnyavalkya (verse 8 of the Acharadhyaya) will have meaning for us now. He says:—" Vedic sacrifices, ritual observances, repression of outer actions, non-killing, alms-giving, vedic study, none of these can compare in merit with the realisation of the self through Yoga-processes; which realisation is indeed the highest Dharma." The commentators rightly add that for this acquiring of wisdom, by meditation and concentration, there are no restrictions of time or place or caste. Whosoever, whensoever and wheresoever practices Yoga, meditation, concentration, control of the wandering mind, he gets self-knowledge, so says Patanjali.

With such time-honoured teachings, as foundation, the false superstructure of a rigidly hereditary caste-system and all that it stands for, cannot fit in and will always remain a mischievous exrescence. At heart the true Hindu is bound to be latitudinarian and a cosmopolitan, though most unfortunately the social environment amidst which he is born, effectually dwarfs and stunts the growth and expansion of his soul. A stage has been reached where the only way of release would appear to be through the shattering blow of the Western hammer on this stone coffin in which that soul is immured. But a surer way is not impossible, that of purification from within.

If orthodoxy were to take to heart the teachings of Manu on this point, and really and truly *practise* it in its *life*, the future prosperity of Hinduism and of the Dharma and culture it stands for, would be absolutely certain. But, alas, the forces of priest-craft, revivalism, bigotry, obscurantism, are very strong, and it is a desperate uphill struggle for all who are trying to knock off the fetters of a dogmatic theology and a hereditary priesthood. Not even Manu's ringing words seem to have the power to open these deliberately closed ears and eyes. The stress Manu lays on the right qualities of head and heart are conveniently left unremembered while narrow exclusive ritualism is hugged lovingly to the breast. Yet life still surges strong in its ancient body, its elasticity is still not wholly lost, and it is yet capable of confounding these poisonous counsels of darkness and of evil.

Manu's words are:—

धृतिः क्षमा दमोऽस्तेयं शौचमिन्द्रियनिग्रहः ।
धीर्विद्या सत्यमक्रोधो दशकं धर्म लक्षणम् ॥
दशलक्षणकोधर्मः सेवितव्यः प्रयत्नतः ।
अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधो शौचमिन्द्रियनिग्रहः ।
एतं सामासिकं धर्मं चातुर्वर्ण्यऽब्रवीन्मनुः ॥

"Patience, forgiveness, control of mind, honesty, purity of mind and body, restraint of the senses, wisdom (insight born of thought and devotion), learning, truthfulness, freedom from anger, these ten are the essential characteristics of Dharma. Abstinence from killing life, truthfulness, equanimity, cleanliness control of the senses, the practice of these is the duty of all the four castes, so sayeth Manu. This Dharma of the tenfold characteristics should be diligently practised by every one."

Section 3.

SOURCES OF HINDUISM

The law books point out clearly the sources of Hinduism. Manu says:—

वेदोऽखिलो धर्ममूलं स्मृतिशीलेच तद्विदाम् ।
आचारश्चैव साधूनामात्मनस्तुष्टिरेवच ॥
वेदः स्मृतिः सदाचारः स्वस्य च प्रियमात्मनः ।
एतच्चतुर्विधं प्राहुः साक्षाद्धर्मस्य लक्षणम् ॥

The Vedas, the Smritis, the actions of wise people, and the satisfaction of one's own heart.—These four are said to be the tests and the sources of Dharma.

The much later Yajnyavalkya says:—

पुराणन्याय मीमांसा धर्मशास्त्राङ्गमिश्रिताः ।
वेदाः स्थानानि विद्यानां धर्मस्य च चतुर्दश ॥

"The Vedas, together with, or as explained by, Purana, Nyaya, Mimansa, Dharma-Shastra, and the Angas constitute the sources of Dharma, as also of the 14 Vidyas."

It will be noticed that this number, fourteen, in the enumeration of the sources of Dharma, is arrived at by counting the Vedas as four, and the Angas as six. Now this presents a rather puzzling problem, for a satisfactory solution of which materials are not available to-day. The problem arises out of the use of the word Purana, and the meaning of the word as understood, not by the later commentators, but by the author himself. Was there only a *single* work known as Purana in his day? If the author thought it necessary to give the count of the Angas and the Vedas, about which there could be no possibility of a mistake, why did he fail to give the number of the Puranas also, if there were more than one in his day?

Does he use the word Purana as another name for the Brahmanas which were replete with all sorts of old legends and stories, and are in fact repertory of the traditional lore of those days? Either meaning is possible. The probability however is in favour of only one Purana, as I have tried to show later on.

There is confusion over the meaning of another word also, Nyaya. It is generally interpreted to mean the system of Gotama. The fact has been forgotten that the Mimansakas also appropriate that word as designating their system of philosophy. The original meaning of the word is "that, which is just and proper;" and we to-day use it in Hindi in this and this sense alone. When we hear of a case that has been justly decided or of a man receiving his due meed whether of praise or of blame, his due reward or punishment, we say *Nyaya hua* "Justice has been done." The word should therefore be interpreted in this sense alone, and its correct English equivalent would be 'Equity.' Mimansa with more reason, has been identified with the system of Jaimini, for it largely deals with the ways and means of interpreting the Vedas. But the system of Badarayana also deals with the subject. So they have come to be respectively called the Purva and the Uttara Mimansas, not so much because of any priority or posteriority, but rather because of the one dealing with the earlier portion of the Vedas, namely the Samhitas and the Brahmans; and the other dealing with the Upanishads which come later than these.

The primary meaning of Mimansa, is excogitation, pondering, meditation, building up thought; the secondary meaning is exegesis, method of interpretation, and it is with this only that we are concerned here and not the Metaphysics of the Mimansa system of Jaimini, of which there is precious little in the Shastra.

Yajnyavalkya further mentions three more sources of Dharma namely the behaviour of righteous persons, that which conduces to one's good, and that which is born of mature deliberation.

It will be noticed that this is substantially a reproduction of Manu's teachings in different words. The Vishnu and the Shiva Puranas would also with perfect justification, have the four Upa-Vedas. included amongst the sources of Dharma; for are they not integral elements in the life of humanity? These are:—Ayur-Veda (the Veda of Medical Science} Dhanur-Veda (the Veda of Military Science) Artha-Veda (the Veda of the Economical and the Political Sciences) and Gandharva-Veda (the Veda of the Fine Arts, of love, of music, of song and dancing etc.)

There is one strange omission; none of these enumerators have mentioned the Dharma and the Grihya, Sutras among the sources, though they are universally recognised as such even more than the metrical Smritis. These sutras have a definite place in the Vedic schools, while the Smritis are no man's land. Perhaps the Sutras may be included in the general name Smriti. Latter-day Hinduism counts the Sutras also amongst the sources of Hindu Law. Family custom too is a well-recognised source.

With such a mass of sources, is it anything to be wondered at that Hinduism is as elusive as life itself and the home of all the 'isms' and 'ologies' in the most bewildering fashion ? Because it is an Anthropological process, the whole art of life, at any stage of human existence is therefore its source, as illimitable as life itself. The meshes of the net are so fine, that it is impossible for the smallest of human activities to escape out of them. Not only everything that we believe to-day, everything that we practice to-day, can be and is assigned to some one pigeon-hole of Dharma, but all that we shall think to-morrow and act to-morrow has pigeon-holes ready for them. But the spirit of the whole thing is rationalised by the inclusion of "one's own conscience" amongst the tests and sources. Herein lies the saving grace of Hinduism. Organised theological and social bigotry may be very strong in favour of custom, ancient usage, the *status quo*, but those who are not weak, need not fear them. These have given way in the past before strong and steady will and reason, and will give way in the future. They are there only to prevent a violent, sudden, thoughtless break from the old. So recognising their utility, we need not lose temper overmuch at their obstructiveness. We may, indeed, even feel thankful that they are there to help to bring out by their resistance, the real stuff in a man and thus help him to reach to a fuller life.

CHAPTER II.

Detailed treatment of the source-books of Hinduism.

Section I.

THE VEDAS

As we have seen above, all authorities, are agreed as to the Vedas being the sources of Hinduism. It seems safe, therefore, to accept the view that the literary foundation of Hinduism is in the Vedic Samhitas—works so old that no well-ascertained facts about their time of composition, their purpose, or their authorship are possible to state to-day. Their history is only now being pieced together from very scattered and fragmentary sources, by scholars all the world over, in the light of Comparative Mythology, Comparative Philology etc., in short, of Anthropology. We Hindus who have the greatest interest in the business are unfortunately doing the least in the matter.

VEDA

The word 'Veda' literally means knowledge, science, so that every text-book of Astronomy, of Physics, of Chemistry, of Mathematics, in fact of all statements of ascertained facts, as apart from mere speculations, theories, could well be called *Veda*.

But usage, as in the case of the word 'Bible,' has rigidly confined the word to the four Samhitas, and the Brahmanas attached to them. The Arya Samajis, however, dispute the point, and use the word to denote only the Samhitas. There is no denying that such was really the ancient usage, but it was totally given up thousands of years ago—that is sometime after the coming into existence of the Brahmanas.

The Veda is asserted to have been only one originally :—

एक एव पुरा वेदः प्रणवः सर्ववाङ्मयः ।
देवो नारायणो नान्यः एकोऽग्निर्वर्ण एवच ॥

Bhagavata, Sk. IX, A. XIV, Sh. 48.

Shridhara's comment on this is that *Pranava* was the only Veda and Hamsa was the name by which the people were known before their division into castes. If this has any meaning, it can only be that there was a time when there was no Veda and no caste system. The ordinary orthodox interpretation however is that a single body of Mantras existed which were later classified and arranged into the four Samhitas, by the Rishi Vyasa, the Rik, the Yajur, the Sama, and the Atharva. This simply means that the orthodox interpretation naturally cannot bring itself to take count of the *Pre*-Vedic age, but begins at the *second* stage, of a single collection, and thence goes on to the *third* stage of differentiated Samhitas.

The memory however of the stage between the *Pre*-Vedic and the *single* Vedic age is preserved in Mahabharata, Manu, Buddha-Charita, Saundarananda etc. It is said in the Mahabharata, Shalya Parva that once upon a time a terrible famine due to a twelve year drought occurred in the land. All the Rishis, except Kavi (Ushanas, Brihaspati?) son of Saraswati and Angiras, wandered off to other lands in search of livelihood, and forgot the Veda. Sáraswata however stayed on by the banks of his mother, the river Saraswati, and kept himself alive on one fish a day which his mother gave him. It was he who recreated, or reproduced the Veda and taught it to the Rishis on their return to their home land. These ungrateful pupils on the strength of themselves being older than Sáraswata became wroth on being addressed as 'children' and had to be rebuked into proper behaviour by the Gods. (Manu 2, 151—152).

That the Veda was clean forgotten like the canon of the earlier Digambar Jainas under similar circumstances is clearly told by Ashvaghosha.

सारस्वतश्चापि जगाद्वेदं नष्टं पुनर्यं ददृशुर्न पूर्वे ।

Buddha-Charita Ed. by E. B. Cowell I. 48.

तथांगिरा रागपरीतचेताः सरस्वतीं ब्रह्मसुतः सिषेवे ।
सारस्वतो यत्रसुतोऽस्यजज्ञे नष्टस्य वेदस्य पुनः प्रवक्ता ॥

Saundara-Nanda Ed. by Hara Prasad Shastri, VII 31.

An inscription on stone published by the late Pandit Chandradhara Guleri in the Nagari Pracharini Patrika Quarterly Vol. 2, No. 2 ascribes the origin of the Saraswat Brahmanas of Punjab to this Rishi.

सरस्वती पत्तन नामधेये सारस्वतास्तस्य सुता बभूवुः ॥

This inscription dated 1341 V. S. has a serious variation in the matter of the fatherhood of Sāraswata. According to this, Dadhichi is the father :—

आसीद्ब्रह्मसरः सुधासहचरं......,.....भांडात्ततः
प्रावर्तिष्ठ सरस्वती सुरनदी गंभीरनीरा भुवि ।
सा तीरे तपसि स्थिते वृतवती देवीदधीचिं मुनिं
तस्मादाप तं वसिष्ठसदृशं सारस्वतं नामतः ॥

After all these statements, one is left wondering whether there was a bar sinister on his escutcheon also, as on that of many other Rishis, and his mother like that of Vyasa, was a fisher girl. It is not easy to believe a man begetting a son from a river-wife in this sceptical century.

We might safely say that the books, as we possess them to-day, do not accurately represent even the redaction of Vyasa. For tradition speaks of many Vyasas, and many other redactors. For instance, the Sishupala Vadha of Magha, mentions Dattatreya as also one of the redactors. Then again the existence of the many shakhas of the Samhitas would be proof positive, if any were required, that the Samhitas we possess are not what Veda Vyasa left behind him. Even the Samhita literature we possess to-day is not one fiftieth of what it was even so late as the days of the Mahabhashya, *i. e.*, about 2200 years ago, and as a reference to Shaunaka's Charana-Vyuha and its various commentaries will also show. What then can be said about the enormous mass of Vedic literature as a whole—the

Brahmanas and the various Sutras; and the plethora of Bhashyas on all of them? It is all gone for ever.

Coming back then to our four Vedas and leaving aside their available Shakhas, we may give very brief sketches of these four Vedas now. The differences of recension which make the different Shakhas are largely due to imperfect preservation of the tradition through forgetting and misremembrance, and the necessity of filling in the gaps and making intelligible the misremembered portions.

THE FOUR VEDAS

The Rigveda consists entirely of riks, lyrics, mainly in the praise of the various Gods. Their number is about ten thousand arranged into suktas numbering 1017 or as some put it as 1028. These suktas, again, are grouped in ten books, called mandalas. The only commentary available on this is that of Sayana, a work of the fourteenth century A. C.

The Yajurveda contains texts known as Yaju-s, prose formulas relating to sacrificial performances, and also rik-s. The Yaju-s constitute about one half of the whole work; and one half of the rik-s, these being identical with those found in Rigveda. I use the word 'identical' instead of 'borrowed' deliberately. For I believe that all the 'borrowing' that ever took place was from the one common source, and that there has been no borrowing from each other. Of course, I do not mean that all these four Samhitas, as we possess them now were compiled simultaneously.

The two main divisions of the Yajurveda are the Black and the White. There are two commentaries on the former by Bhatta Bhaskara and by Sayana—both published; and three on the latter—Ubbata, Sayana and Mahidhara, all published. Ubbata is the oldest of these, being a work of the reign of Bhoja, to whose court the author was attached.

The Samaveda consists entirely, with the exception of barely seventy-five stanzas, of riks, which are all to be found in the Rigveda, but set to music for chanting at the Soma sacrifice. It has no historical value. The only available Bhashya on it, that of Sayana, has been published.

The Atharva Veda contains about 6000 stanzas, divided into twenty books. About 1200 of these are identical with those in the Rigveda. About one-sixth of the whole work consists of prose. This Veda subserved a very different purpose from those of the other three Vedas. It is a collection of poetical and prose incantations for the cure of evils, normal and super-normal; for the infliction of injuries on enemies; and for the securing of worldly objects like wealth, and women for one's self and friends. Its salient feature is *domestic* sorcery, as against the *non*-domestic sorcery, of the Yajur-veda. As a source for the history of old Aryan culture it is even more important, than the other three Vedas.

In a sacrifice, the priest called 'Hota' recited the Rigveda, which, for that reason, came to be known as the 'Hautra' Veda; the Adhvaryu recited the

Yajur-veda, hence also called the 'Adhvaryava' Veda; the Udgata the Samveda, hence also called the 'Audgatra' Veda; and the Brahma, an officer added later on, claimed the Atharva Veda as his own though it had nothing to do with his duties, and it henceforth came to be known as the 'Brahma' Veda. The Brahma recited nothing during the sacrifice, being a sort of presiding officer watching over the due performance of the complicated ritual. Another reason for this name of the Atharva Veda may lie in the fact that a large number of Upanishads dealing with Brahma-vidya, mostly of later production, were attached to this Veda; because of its being a sort of no man's land the process was easy.

THE ETERNITY OF THE VEDAS.

Some remarks about the conviction of orthodoxy as to the supernatural origin of the Vedas, as to their being verbally revealed by the Creator Brahma, and as to their eternal existence may be made here. These pious beliefs cannot obviously be shared by any historically-minded person. Such beliefs are wholly untenable, for any one who has studied the originals with an unbiassed mind and in a scientific spirit, with the help that the comparative sciences of Philology, of Religion, and of Anthropology supply, and is unhypnotised by ecclesiastical glamour and undeterred by social pressure. Their manifold inconsistencies, their frequent meaninglessness, their grotesqueness, their gross obsceneties, called down upon the Vedas even in old days, the withering sarcasm and denunciations of people who dared to defy public opinion.

The Charavakas were the uncompromising opponents of all priest-craft. According to them the authors of the Vedas were, buffoons, cunning rogues, and flesh-gorging, liquor-guzzling savages.

त्रयोवेदस्य कर्तारः भण्डधूर्तनिशाचराः
(सर्वदर्शनसंग्रह)

They however in their intensity of revolt against Vedic beliefs and practices forgot the elementary psychological factor, that abuse rouses pugnacity and the persons assailed work themselves up into a mood where sweet reasonableness becomes impossible and the attitude becomes not unlike that of the political patriot, "my country right or wrong," "my beliefs and practices right or wrong.'' Gentle, good-tempered banter may wean one from foolish beliefs and practices, but even that has not the power to inculcate right doctrines and right actions. These come only by the power of high example. But the volume and force of public opinion in favour of the other view was much too strong to be dammed by a few Intellectuals, and they were engulfed in the rushing flood. What we know of these Rationalists is only through their opponents, the orthodox people, and as everyone knows that theological controversies are not the homes of truth, it is quite probable that the descriptions of their views are travesties.

Then again there are works available which give the names of the authors of the different hymns and the occasions on which they were composed. There are any number of references to *old* Mantras and *new* ones. A good deal of light could be thrown on the chronology of the mantras, if the statements in the Vayu, the Brahmanda, the Matsya and other Puranas in the *Vamshanukirtan*, portions about the geneology and priority of the various families of the Rishis were carefully examined. This test applied to the Rig Veda would show that the oldest and the latest mantras cover a period of almost a thousand years. All this evidence cannot be ignored by the genuine enquirer simply because from the later Hinduism, the memory of their human authorship has been wiped off. We may certainly revere them, as we revere the memory of our dead ancestors, but from this it does not follow that we should believe that we are literally descended from the Sun and the Moon or that we should attempt to model our lives exclusively almost six thousand years later, on the lives of those ancestors.

The Puranas, which orthodoxy cannot very well throw everboard, support fully the statements abovemade.

एको वेदः चतुष्पादः संहृत्य तु पुनः पुनः ।
संक्षेपादायुषश्चैक व्यस्यते द्वापरेष्विह ।
ऋषिपुत्रैः पुनर्वेदा भिद्यन्ते दृष्टिविभ्रमैः ।
मंत्रब्राह्मणविन्यासैः स्वरक्रमविपर्ययैः ॥
संहृता ऋग्यजुस्साम्नां संहन्यन्यन्ते श्रुतर्षिभिः ।
सामान्याद्वै कृताच्चैव दृष्टिभिन्नैः क्वचित् क्वचित

ब्राह्मणंकल्पसूत्राणि मंत्रप्रवचनानिच ।
एकमाध्वर्यवंपूर्वमासीत् द्वैधं तु तत्पुनः ॥
तथैवाथर्व ऋक्सान्नां विकल्पैश्चाप्य संक्षयैः ।
व्याकुलो द्वापरेष्वर्थः क्रियतेभिन्नदर्शनैः ॥

Matsya Purana, Ch. 144 ; Vayu, Ch. 58.

"The one Veda has been repeatedly mutilated, because of the incapacities of men and their unhealthy and shortened lives ; hence too has it been divided up in the Dwapara age. Yet further differences (in the text etc.,) have been introduced by the descendants of the Rishis, by errors of sight and mistakes of the mind. Corruptions in the arrangements of the Mantras, the Brahmanas, the Kalpa-sutras, and of the *Svara* and the *Krama* have crept in, and the Rig, Yajur and Sama have been compiled over and over again by the Shrutarshis. The Yajur was only one, then it became two. So also the sense of the Rig, Yajur and Sama becomes confused in the Dwapara period."

A little thought would help one to realise that it was not the Vedas that instituted the sacrifices, but the sacrifices that brought into existence the Vedas as we know them. The Mantra portion of the Vedas is known as the Samhita, which means a work which has been put together, arranged, composed from pre-existing material. The art of the physician does not create diseases, it is the diseases that bring into existense physicians and medicines, and medical books. That even the ancients had a glimmering of this fact is proved by a verse of the Atharva Veḍa XI. 7. 24.

ऋचः सामानि छंदांसि पुराणं यजुषा सह ।
उच्छिष्टाच्चज्ञिरे सर्वे दिवि देवाः दिविश्रिताः ॥

"From the leavings of the sacrifice sprang the Rik etc." That is to say, the sacrifice preceded in time the Vedas. These gradually came into existence after the performance of the sacrifices began.

But this statement is not to be understood as applying to the hymns—the Mantras—individually which have been arranged and re-arranged polished and twisted to serve as handbooks for the Sacrifices. Originally the hymns were composed, as poems are all the world over, as expressions of the emotions of the Kavi, the Poet, one of the names by which these ancient seers are known. The Vayu Purana gives five causes which led to the utterance of the Mantras—

असंतोषाद्भयात्क्रोधान्मोहाच्छोकाच्चपंचधा (1. Ch. 59. V, 61.)

Dissatisfaction, Fear, Anger, Perplexity and Grief.

The Matsya Purana assigns somewhat different causes.

परितोषाद्भयाद्दुःखात् सुखाच्छोकाच्च पञ्चधा (Ch. 142.)

Satisfaction, Fear, Pain, Pleasure and Grief.

The only possible explanation of the 'Superhuman' origin of the Vedas, that has been suggested, is that the hymns as we have them are not the work of any one single person, they have passed down from person to person, through an immemorial tradition; and in this sense may be called 'apaurusheya,' superhuman. Another view is that the very highest and most advanced class of Rishis, the Paramarshis, were also technically called Ishwaras, and as they composed the true original mantras, these were called 'Ishwariya' and then 'apaurusheya.'

THE SAMHITAS

The Samhitas, as we have them to-day, notwithstanding their many revisions and re-arrangements, still consist of very heterogeneous materials, due to the conservative instincts of these old-world priestly redactors. And for this we cannot be too thankful. It is this which helps us to go behind the works of the Hindu commentators and test their explanations in the light of the works themselves.

These Samhitas though put together in the interests of the sacrificer—the Yajnika—preserve Riks which are the lineal ascendants of the thorough-going Idealism of the last 1,500 years. Some of the lyrics of the Rigveda are outspoken declarations, in beautiful language, of the truths of Pantheism:—

एकं सद् विप्रा बहुधावदन्ति ।

"Being is but one; Him, the knowers declare by many names." It was a strange fantastic bridge by which this side of the tradition passed down to develop in the full-blown Vedanta of a later day.

Queer company they are in, these heart-searching thoughts. They must have looked like Mummers in the assemblies of sacrificing priests and their clients. But the whirligig of time brings strange revenges. It is they who are the honoured guests at the feast of religion to-day, and the proud and arrogant Shrauta-sacrifice has been shown the door.

THEIR MUTUAL RELATION.

A few words on the order of the composition of the four Samhitas, and the modern methods of interpreting them, as against the old uncritical, theological methods exemplified by the old school, on one side, and the new school of the Arya Samaj on the other, would be helpful here.

It has been so generally asserted by European scholars that the Rigveda is the oldest of the Vedas, that it is taken for granted by every one now, and no one questions its claim to priority. But there are certain portions of the Yajurveda whose language appears to be older than the language of the oldest parts of the Rigveda. There is further the tradition, preserved amongst the followers of the Yajurveda, that their Veda is older than the Rigveda, and no reasons for putting aside this tradition have been put forward. This tradition is further supported by Puranic statements that Yajur was the first and single Veda which was broken up and re-arranged into four.

यजुस्सर्वत्रगीयते, एक आसीत् यजुर्वेदस्तं चतुर्धाव्यकल्पयत् ।

It seems that out of a previously unsystematic single collection, all the non-sacrificial portions were lumped up together as the Atharva, and the remaining portion was arranged in three sacrificial manuals for the three priests. The duties of the Hota were comparatively insignificant, and so, large pieces of connected riks were thrown together; while the Adhvaryu-veda had naturally to take on a very specialised shape. Notwithstanding its specialised character we see that it was not possible to remove all traces of ideas of the nature of those of which the Atharva is so full, for, in this Veda as well those ideas occur. though sparsely. Even here we see that the first arrangement was not quite satisfactory, and that it was left for a later day to produce the Shukla Yajur, the White, the well-arranged Yajur, as against the Black, the ill-arranged Yajur. The creation of mantras had come to an end when these compilations came into existence, and the necessary evidence for determining the mere priority of compilation is hard to produce. It is mere prejudice on the part of foreign scholars to ignore so completely the Hindu tradition, because of the fancied historical nature of the Rig as against the liturgical nature of the Yajur.

THE ATHARVA

We may now take up the question of the position and sequence of the Atharva Veda. It has been dealt with hardly by not only the European Orientalist, but also by the Hindus themselves, so much so, that no Atharva Vedis exist anywhere in India, as a separate community, as do the followers of the other Vedas. The probable reason why the true place and nature of the Atharva Veda, is often missed, even by the European scholar, is because he has not been able to shake off the influence of the Hindu prejudice against it and check and correct it by reference to ascertainable facts. This Veda represents the ordinary life of the community, full of desires, illnesses and disappointments, loves and hates, which it was meant to cure and satisfy by means of charms and incantations, rituals and herbs. Naturally all this was " occult lore " *par-excellence* and not to be divulged to anybody. This will account for much of the silence with regard to this Veda. Later when ethical and philosophical teachings had changed the public standpoint somewhat, the feeling of a little shame in resorting to such measures of witch-craft would creep in, and would give rise to hypocrisy. The believer would take advantage of the practices, but would repudiate them publicly. The word *Trayee Vidya* 'three kinds of knowledge,' of which so much has been sought to be made is easily accountable. In those early days when sacrifices were the main feature of the religion of the Vedic Hindu, this fourth Veda was no use either to the Hota, the Udgata or the Adhvaryu, while each of the other three Vedas were appropriated to the uses of these three and so naturally this had no place in the *Trayee* Vidya. In a later age when the word Trayee had become current and firmly fixed in the mind of the people, and this Veda was appropriated by the Brahmà who was only a " watcher of the sacrifice " having nothing to do with its actual performance, it was too late to drop the " three " altogether.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE ATHARVA AND THE OTHER THREE VEDAS.

The language of the Atharva hymns and the ideas and beliefs underlying them are not all different to those of the other three Vedas. Witch-craft is as essential a part of those as of the Atharva, the very same fetish worship and animism is to be met in them as in this, the constantly dreaded wrath of the avenging spirits has to be mollified, no less there than here. All four sprang from the same broad current of popular superstition and practice, which in one case, owing wholly to external reasons, became the "higher religion" and its true origin and character conveniently forgotton, while in the other no circumstances arose to cast a veil over its traditional character. The real difference between the Atharva and the other three Vedas consists in the fact that the contents of the former are concerned mainly with the domestic acts and the daily life of the people and prescribe simple rituals for carrying them out. It follows that they are far more widespread and pervasive in their action than the pompous contents of the latter. The Purohita of a chief had to be well-versed in its mantras if he was to guard his king against harm and to injure his enemies at the same time. The Rig, Yajur, and Sama have always arrested attention and have been idealised because the ritual with which they deal came to be regarded as something grand and splendid costing untold treasures, which few could afford. These naturally were made to minister, to show, and hence their artificial importance. It is only an uncritical and sentimental attitude that would relegate the Atharva Veda to unmerited obloquy while raising the other three to a high pedestal.

The Atharvanas, the Bhrigus, the Angirasas of the Atharva Veda are some of the oldest rishis in comparison to whom, Vasishtha, Vishvàmitra, Yajnyavalkya of the other Vedas are parvenus. Even to-day in modern India these simple sorceries have not been killed out but form part and parcel of the life of the people from the lowest to the highest. No household is free from them, not even of 'enlightened' Bengal; and things take place daily with the cognizance of the 'graduate' head of the family, there, which he would blush to acknowledge. There is nothing to choose and discriminate between the four vedas; if anything, the balance would be in favour of the Atharva, for like the daily inconsistencies and surprises of human life, it contains a far larger mass of the Brahmavidya, coupled though it is with petty sorceries, than all the other three put together.

It is only that which makes a big splash in the steady flowing mighty river of life that makes an impression while the silent onward motion of the waters is unheeded; so it has been with the amount of attention attracted by the three Vedas. The big splash of the sacrifice has been noted and cherished while the humble but steady and all-pervasive action of the "grihya" ceremonies of the Atharva have passed by unnoticed and unacknowledged, nay, even decried.

To argue for the lateness of the Atharva Veda, because the other Vedas do not mention it, is as reasonable as to uphold that the Rig and Sama Vedas did not exist in the days of Apastamba because he does not mention them in his Sutras.

STAGES OF TRIBAL EVOLUTION

For anthropological reasons it is certain that the *matter*, the *contents* of the Atharva Veda is, one might almost say, primal; while that of the Rig and the Yajuh is decidedly later. In the Rig and the Yajuh we come across a state of things representing the third stage of tribal evolution. The first was the Totemistic stage when individualisation had not occured and the tribe lived and acted and thought together as a *whole*, a sort of one soul animating a number of bodies; or to take a physical example, a thousand electric clocks all connected and regulated from one central station. It is here that one must search for the beginnings of religion. It has its root in the tribal custom and the social conscience it generated. Here are the beginnings of the sacraments, *Samskaras*, and of the ritual which bifurcated into the public grand sacrifices the Shrauta of the chiefs on the one hand, and the homely private personal house-hold ones of every family on the other. Here may be seen the seeds of individual magic, which followed on the heels of the tribal magic when the latter began to lose vitality and decay because of the rising feeling of individuality.

In the earlier stages of human evolution the feeling of differentiation between human and non-human beings did not exist. Even inanimate things were treated as if they were responsible agents, whose vengeance had to be dreaded, and who could be placated by suitable means. Even a cursory study of the Shrauta ritual would prove this to any unbiassed mind. That this attitude of mind is still very widely, in fact almost universally, spread throughout Hindu India is shown by the common belief in the transmigration of human souls into vegetable and animal bodies, as taught in Manu. When the double boundary line of want of locomotion and of dumbness was not strong enough to bring home to these early people, their own differentiation from even the vegetable kingdom, there would be nothing to prevent their belief in the case of the animal kingdom. For them animal cries were spoken words like their own but only different, and could be understood by any one who had received the requisite training. The animals, the vegetables, the minerals took vengeance on any one that destroyed them. The Vedic Rishis therefore took good care to guard against their vengeance in their Shrauta sacrifices. Even to-day an old-world Hindu, be he an unlettered peasant or a learned Pandit, guards against offending these. He would not break off a flower without an apology, or break a stone without propitiating it. For him the whole universe is inspired with motives similar to his own, and possesses thoughts, feelings, actions, akin to his own. This aboriginal attitude persists in other lands also; neither Islam nor Christianity has been able to kill it out wholly.

OLD AND NEW HYMNS.

It scarcely needs pointing out, that the hymns in the Rig and the Yajuh that exist in our present redaction of these two Vedas are both *old* and *new*. In every tribe there are always a few persons, men and women, more gifted than their fellows, and it is they who break out into songs for every great festival that occurs. These songs might be either wholly new or wholly old, the work of artists of a bygone age, which have so strongly caught the fancy that they are not allowed to die, or they might be old ones worked over. The working over process might have taken place, however, so many times, or it might have been so very drastic, the very first time it was attempted, that the character and the language of the original would be changed almost past recognition. Naturally only those songs would survive which expressed most vividly the current ideals of the tribe. These songs or hymns have all undergone a very long-drawn process of sifting ang re-sifting and of arrangement and re-arrangement. after the closing of the Mantra period, till they were, for the last time, fixed in the Samhitas as we have them now. There has been change since those times also, but its only result seems to be the division of each of the four

Samhitas into the tertiary stage of slightly differing branches, Shakhas, Schools. How tenacious the grip of the customs of the early tribal days is on mankind, is very well exemplified by the modern Hindu, who strenuously continues to practice the rituals of those far-off days, many thousands of years ago. The soul left these rites long ago, the mummy lingers still. Literary proofs of such survivals, in the West are many; here I will refer just to one book, C. G. Leland's "Etruscan and Roman Remains". The book is a study in the wide-spread survival of witch-craft which has withstood in turn the domination of the Etruscan, the Roman, and finally the Roman Catholic Church, all these long ages.

METHOD OF INTERPRETATION.

Before going on to an account of the Vedas, it would be useful to give some idea of the method of interpreting the Samhitas and the Brahmanas, and the enormous difficulties of the task.

The language of the Samhitas ceased to be intelligible to its custodians very early, long before the days of the Brahmanas. The very fact of the existence of the *pada-patha* word division, proves it beyond question. No one to-day would dream of getting by heart each separate word in, say for instance, Tulasi Das's Ramayana. The getting by heart of words is done only by one who is beginning the study of a new language. If there had been no *pada-patha*, no word division, the Samhitas would have been a sealed book today. It is this word division which is the earliest and the simplest commentary on them. Can we be sure that it was done by one who was as familiar with the language and the ideas of the hymns as their ancient composers? I am afraid not. If there had been alive in all its pristine vigour and vitality, the necessary knowledge, the need of such a commentary would never have presented itself to any one. It is most likely therefore, that the word-division is the work of some one who, not in *full-touch* with the Samhitas, and keenly alive to the ignorance of the subject all around him, started explaining them by the simple devise of separating each word in the hymns and the prose formulas. This *pada-patha* may be the work of a single individual or the consolidated result of a whole school of workers. We have no means of deciding this point. Can we be sure that there has been no mis-division of words and even of sentences? Anyone who has studied the work carried on in the deciphering and explaining of the long dead languages of Babylon and Assyria, sees the numberless mistakes made. Even in modern living English it is quite easy to misdivide words and sentences. A few examples would bring it home to the reader "thousandeyed" as, "thou-sand-eyed"; "have gotten tickets," as "have got ten tickets" "Godisnowhere" may be divided as "God is now here" or "God is nowhere." In Sanskrit "Kamatovyavaharyah" can be broken up as "Kamatah Vyavaharyah" and also as "Kamatah avyavaharyah," two totally contradictory ideas; or take the famous

Brihadaranyaka logion, which has been divided as तत्त्वमसि by Shankara, as अतत्त्वमसि by Madhva producing two diametrically opposed systems of Vedanta. All this would be productive of new words and new meanings.

That the tradition had been lost is well brought out by an intelligent study of the Nirukta. In it are collected diverse explanations of a large number of Vedic words as proposed by various early interpreters. The rationalising process had long been at work even in the putting together of the Samhitas, and far more so in the Brahmanas; and explanations based on insufficient facts were solemnly trotted out to meet the need for putting some meaning into things that were no longer part of a living tradition. The interpretation of such ancient documents is not an easy matter especially when Theology has been long at work upon them. To interpret them rightly a sound knowledge of comparative Philology, of Ethnology, of Archaeology and of Comparative Mythology is necessary. In short, world-wide-knowledge of History using the word in its widest sense, is an essential part of the equipment of the would-be interpreters of these ancient documents. A merely intensive study of the texts will not carry one very far. Neither the old orthodox interpreters nor the Neo-Vedic revivalists are fitted for the task, for two good reasons: One of them is the want of the necessary equipment of knowledge; the second is that both of them have axes of their own to grind.

Western scholars, who have not the Hindu's particular theological bias and his foregone conclusions to support, so far as Hindu religion and Hindu customs are concerned (though they often have pre-conceived notions of their own) and have besides a knowledge of cognate languages and religions of the early social conditions of existence, and also of similar conditions exisiting to-day in different parts of the world, have a better chance of discovering the true meaning of these works than our own people. In all such pioneer attempts, mistakes will naturally creep in; yet the method is not to be rejected because of these errors. Further investigation will set them right. So far the Western Orientalists have not called in the help of the Ethnologist, the cultural Anthropologist to their aid. When this aid has been fully rendered to Philology then will emerge the real meanings of these *fragments* of an ancient faith in all their actuality and fullness.

THE VEDAS AS INDEXES TO SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

The collection of Mantras known as the Rig Veda, is in the main, the reflex of the life of a vigorous, active, and healthy people—a people that prayed most for length of days, for sturdy sons, abundant cattle, doughty retainers, and victory over their enemies, a people whose religion was a simple worship of the deified powers of nature. But even during the Vedic period, there comes a profound change. The Yajur Veda represents a turning point in the development of the Hindu character. It belongs to the period of he highly-developed ritual and originated in the sacred and famous Madhyadesha. Here were made the first great advances in the arts and institutions of civilisation, in trade and in science. Here also priest-families and warrior-families attained to such importance as to assert their independence of the people, and so bring about the strongly marked class-distinctions that grew into the rigid system of caste. And here, with the waxing power of the priest-hood, the old Vedic religion was converted into an infinitely complex system of sacrifices and ceremonies. To this period belongs the belief in metempsychosis, a universal and overpowering reality to the Hindu mind. With the growing tendency of the Hindu character towards introspection arise the ways of the hermit-life and the asceticism which are so prominent in the Hindu Middle Ages, and which in turn led naturally to the habit of theosophic speculation. The air of the Gangetic Delta has relaxed both the physical and the mental fibre of the Hindu, and he has become a Quietist.

THE BRAHMANA TEXTS

The Hindu character has been transformed almost beyond recognition. The change is wonderful. It would be incomprehensible but for the literature of the Brahmanas. These are prose works, aiming at an explanation of the mystical meanings of the different sacrificial acts referred to in the Samhita, and indicating the various advantages that accrue from their proper performance. Incidentally, a description of the different sacrifices is also given, and in connection with them, speculations as to the various interpretations of the Mantras are indulged in, and traditions and stories cited in proof thereof. As a whole and by themselves, they are puerile. But as the sole and faithful index of an immensely important phase in the development of an ethnic type, they have a great interest—an interest heightened by the fact that the annals of human evolution hardly present another type whose history can be studied through so many centuries in unbroken continuity. These works too have taken many centuries in composing, during which period they too have undergone additions and substractions similar to those of the Samhitas, though probably not to that extent.

The sacerdotal class, ever magnifying its office, has invested the sacrifice with a most exaggerated importance and sanctity. The sacrifice has become the central point of the Brahmana's life and thought. About it he has spun a dense web of mystery, and in each of its events he sees a hidden symbolism. Everything is not only that which *it is* but also that which it *signifies*. So lost is the Brahmana in these esoteric vagaries that to him the line of demarcation between "is" and "signifies" becomes almost wholly obliterated. What the world deems to be the realities of life are to him but as pale shadows. The sacrifice and its events are the real facts, and to fathom their mysteries means omnipotence and salvation.

It must not be forgotten that the phases of development represented by the Mantras and the Brahmanas, in their existing shapes, are not separated by hard and fast lines. The oldest Yajur texts are of the transition type. They are called Samhitas and contain indeed Mantras in abundance; but the Mantras are mingled with prose passages which are the first Brahmanas. The later Brahmanas are the systematic treatises of that name; they presuppose a thorough acquaintance with the course and details of the sacrifices and do not undertake a systematic exposition thereof.

THE ARANYAKAS.

The Aranyakas are still further sub-divisions of these, and they treat of certain peculiar sacrifices, *e. g.*, Brahma-medha, and the Mahavrata or Paundarika, a most grossly indecent affair where harlotry was practised and the human life-seed was offered as an oblation. One such sacrifice was performed so late as about the end of the nineteenth century in Madras. In these books the already lengthy theosophic and philosophic passages of the Brahmanas are further developed, and the craze for mystical explanations is carried to such extreme lengths that cosmogonic speculations are indulged in, deducing Creation in terms of sacrificial, ritual and sexual reproduction, the logical culmination of which is the Paundarika sacrifice and the still further development of the Tantric Vamamarga. These practices may be compared with the equally filthy practices carried on even today in the West, under the name of Black Mass, etc. Psychiatric literature throws much light on them.

English translations of the Rig, the White Yajuh, the Sama and the Atharva, have been made by R. T. H. Griffith. The Atharva has also been translated by Bloomfield, and by Whitney and Lanmann. The Krishna Yajur has been translated by A. B. Keith. The important Brahmanas are the Aitareya, translated by Haug as also by A. B. Keith who has also translated the Kaushitaki; the Shatapatha, translated by Eggeling; and the Taittiriya, the Tandya or Panchavimsha; and the Gopatha. None of these are yet available in English. The important Aranyakas are the Aitareya, the Shankhayana, both translated by A. B. Keith and the Taittiriya as yet untranslated.

THE UPANISHADS.

The fourth sub-division of the Vedas are the Upanishads. These deal primarily with the various *Vidyas* or methods of meditation, and were promulgated with a view to supplying the newly risen need for some means of getting into touch with the supernatural in place of the time-honoured but now discredited Yajnavidya or the bloody sacrifices. These *vidyas* insist on the supreme and absolute value to man of getting into touch with the nature of Being by the practice of various meditations, as against the way of sacrifices. Naturally every one of these *vidyas* is not of superlative merit; some are good and useful, others frivolous and puerile. The notion that the Upanishads deal only with Brahmavidya and with philosophic insight into the problems of Being is of a comparatively modern growth, and is due cheiefly to a misunderstanding of the historical conditions under which the Upanishad literature grew up. The sole reason for the existence of the Upanishads consists in the aforesaid *Vidyas*, and not in sheer hard thinking and intellectual speculation, as the modern student might imagine; and it is only as subsidiary to the vidyas that Brahmavidya is introduced. The very same old-world unhistorical methods have been freely used by the indigenous commentators in interpreting this later literature; each rival commentator has, by a free use of the Mimansa methods, tortured the texts and made them yield meanings consonant with his *pre-conceived a priori* ideas.

A CLASSIFICATION OF THE UPANISHADS

A great deal of confusion also exists with regard to the authenticity of the Upanishads. They number more than three hundred. The question as to which are genuine and which are forgeries does not concern us here. They are all genuine or all spurious according to the point of view from which we look at them. For our present purpose it would be enough to attempt to fix the the probable times and order of their composition. We may thus classify the Upanishads as (1) occurring in Samhitas, (2) attached to Brahmanas and Aranyakas, (3) believed to be parts of as yet undiscovered Aranyakas, (4) not belonging to any of the above categories but quoted by Shankara in his Sutra-Bhasya (5) quoted by Ramanuja and (6) distinctly sectarian.

A few examples will make the above division clear. (1) The sole example of this class is the Ishavasya. When or why it was put in where it now occurs at the end of the White Yajur Veda, is now impossible even to guess at, as it has absolutely no connection with the preceeding 39 adhyayas of the Samhita, nor with the Shatapatha Brahmana; (2) Aitareya, Taittiriya Chandogya, Brihadaranayaka, Kena and Kaushitaki exhaust this list; (3) Katha and Maitrayaniya are the only two examples of this kind, (4) Jabala, Mundaka, Mandukya, Svetashvatara and Prashna, are quoted by Shankara (5) Garbha, Mahanarayana, Chulika, Mahopanishad and Subala are to be met with in Ramanuja's Shri-Bhashya. The antiquity of the works in lists (3) and (4) is doubtful on account of the language, which has lost somewhat the antiquarian flavour of the earliest groups. (6) Under this head come such as Gopalatapini (Vaishnava) Tirupuratapini (Shakta) Kalagnirudra (Shaiva) and Kaivalya (Advaita). The style here is distinctly modern and the majority of these cannot be safely placed more than 500 to 600 years ago. The flavour of antiquity and authority sought to be given to them by interested sectarians is transparent fraud, and none but those having vested interests are imposed upon by their being called Upanishads

OTHER SACRED BOOKS

Besides these, our sacred literature comprises the various Sutras, the Smritis, the Puranas, the Agamas or Tantras, the Ramayana, and the Mahabharata, including the Harivamsha. But the whole of this vast literature has been tampered with much more mercilessly than the Vedas. The authorship of the greater number of these, is wholly problematical. To say nothing about the Tantras, even the Smritis which go by the name of Manu, Yajnyavalkya etc., are not their works. Neither are the 18 principal Puranas, the works of Vyasa. What with their diverse origins, as regards time, place, and purpose, and their many and various recastings, they present a most heterogeneous mass of materials, interesting and helpful to the historian but most disconcerting to orthodoxy which insists on regarding the whole mass as authoritative and thus finds itself landed in a hopeless bog.

The reasons for these reprehensible tamperings may be found in the necessity of the changed conditions of things. Ancient authority had to be noted for the later practice. Hence the vital necessity of forgery for the sacerdotal classes, of invention, of the assigning of good meanings to bad practices. The real test whether any given body of doctrines should continue to be the 'revelation' for any given community is the moral one. So long as the injunctions laid down and the illustrative stories put forward are such as are accepted without challenge, it is all right. But as soon as they begin to be questioned, on the ground of their ethical lowness or even of irrationality, or historical improbability, the very questioning becomes clear proof of the fact that the race has progresssd beyond the traditional body of doctrines, which would thenceforward, prove to be more a curse than a blessing.

It ought to be clearly realised that Vedism, to give it its correct name—is not merely ancient in *age*, but is so also in its *outlook* on the universe. That conception the latter day Hindus have completely outgrown. To-day we may through the force of long-inherited prejudices, or for the lower motives of selfish interests, continue parrot-like to repeat our faith in the 'saving' efficacy of sacrifices; but our actual daily life proves incontestably that these old-world tenets are stone dead and possess no real, living, influence on our hearts and minds. We are beginning to feel that whether the world-process be or be not, from the far distant standpoint of sidereal and solar cycles, an eternal squirrel's cage, as depicted in the Puranas specially, of a never-ending, self-repeating reproduction, of the changes of Pralaya and Shristi, and Shrishti and Pralaya, what the Buddhist terms the endless rotation of the wheel of Sansara; yet that its significance to us as human beings, from the nearer standpoint of human history, is a continual progress. Revivalism with its fantastic modes of interpreting the Vedas and the Puranas, unable to grasp and deal with the details of human history, content to learn by rote a few broad generalisations, sedulously preaches to the ignorant masses and the half-educated upper classes that these are the quintessence of all knowledge and of all wisdom, past, present and future, and diligently hinders that progress. But the lamp lit by Ramanand and Kabir and Nanak and a host of other true Bhaktas in all parts of the country is not to be blown out by the puffs of such obscurantist breezes. The light thereof is growing steadier and stronger and helping to produce a new synthesis, which will remove ali mischievous accretions and carry forwards the evolution of Hinduism.

P. T. Srinivas Iyengar's
" Life in Ancient India "
' Srinivas Varadachari & Co.,
Madras.
M. Bloomfield's " Religion of the Veda "
J. Muir's " Original Sanskrit Texts "
Vol. 3rd.
Max Muller's
" History of Ancient Sanskrit Lîterature"
(Panini Office, Allahabad).,
Macdonnell and Keith's " Vedic Index".,
are all indispensable books which should be read by those interested in the Vedic literature.

Section 2.

THE SUTRAS.

We may now go on to deal with the non-Vedic but sacred literature. First come the Sutras. It must, however, be always borne in mind that when we speak of the various periods, the Sutra period, the Smriti period etc., we mean no hard and fast divisions of time; the periods all over-lap each other. The Sutras or Aphorisms, are condensed statements, like *formulæ*, and depend very largely for their intelligibility on the commentaries. Every branch of Hindu activity—religion, art, science, literature, philosophy—has works in the Sutra style. The earliest examples of these are the Shrauta-Sutras, so called because they treat of the sacrifices (Yajnas), prescribed in the 'Shruti'; the Grihya Sutras, which treat of domestic rites; the Dharma Sutras which deal with law, and the Pratishakhya Sutras, so named because they deal with the phonetics of each separate (prati) vedic school (Shakha). Then there are the well-known sutras, of Panini and others on grammar; the sutras on Bhakti; on love (Kamashastra); of the schools of philosophy and so on.

THE SMRITIS

Though the name Smriti, includes the Sutras as well as their metrical counterparts, still in ordinary language the name applies to the metrical paraphrases and adaptations of the Grihya and the Dharma Sutras. The most famous Smritis are those attributed to Manu, Yajnavalkya, Narada and Parashara. There are altogether about one hundred and fifty Smritis. I use the word "attributed" advisedly. For instance Manu is definitely ascribed to Bhrigu, and it is absurd to believe that the work is the composition of the mythical progenitor of the human race, or even of the Manu referred to in the Yajur Veda. Not only the style is against any such early date, but even the contents and the references to earlier lawgivers make such popular belief altogether untenable. It is a work which has probably as its basis, the Grihya and Dharma Sutras of the School of the Manavas, a branch of the Black Yajur Veda, and was composed most likely sometimes between B. C. 500-100. Because its base was the Manava Sutra, it became quite easy to produce the confusion, that was necessary to make it acceptable as a Universal text-book of law, by quietly taking Manava to mean "Manu's."

Section 3.

THE PURANAS.

Coming now to the Puranas, we see the change from Vedic polity which had begun in the Smritis, completed here. The Vedas, while accorded full lip-reverence, are absolutely put aside, and a wholly different and even antagonistic set of ideas and practices are in full swing.

According to the lexicographers, Puranas are works which treat of five subjects.

सर्गश्च प्रतिसर्गश्च वंशो मन्वन्तराणि च ।
वंशानुचरितं चैव पुराणं पंचलक्षणम् ॥

They treat of creation, dissolution, the geneologies of the spiritual and the temporal chiefs, and of the Manus.

Besides this a great amount of law, science and philosophy is also to be found in them. As they are today, they very much fulfil the purpose of Sectarian Encyclopedias.

According to the Brahmanda Purana—and the verses are to be found in other puranas also—there was only one Purana to start with like the one Veda. Vyas after re-arranging the Veda into four separate books and teaching them to four different pupils, compiled one Purana and taught it to the Suta, Lomaharsana. This shows that the *Matter* of the Purana is fairly ancient. Lomharsana in his turn, taught the Purana to six disciples. Three of these, namely, Akritavrana Kashyapa, Somadatta Savarni, and Susharma Shenshapayana, wrote three Puranas; while Lomaharsana continued to teach the original. This was quite a small work, comprising only 4000 verses: and so were two of the three newer compositions as well. Each of these original Purana Samhitas, contain four parts namely, Akhyana, Upakhyana, Gatha and Kalpa, and their differences are only textual and not in the substance.

अस्मिन् युगे तदा व्यासः पाराशर्यः परन्तपः ।
द्वैपायन इति ख्यातः विष्णोरंशः सनातनः ॥
अथ शिष्यान् स जग्राह चतुरोवेदकारणात् ।
इतिहासपुराणस्य कल्पवाक्यस्य चैव हि ॥
मांचैव प्रतिजग्राह भगवानीश्वरः प्रभुः ।
आख्यानैश्चाप्युपाख्यानैः गाथाभिः कल्पजोक्तिभिः ॥
पुराणसंहितां चक्रे पुराणार्थविशारदः ।
षट्शः कृत्वा मयाप्युक्तं पुराणमृषिसत्तमाः ॥
आत्रेयः सुमतिर्धीमान् काश्यपोऽह्यकृतव्रणः ।
भारद्वाजोऽग्निवर्चाश्च वासिष्ठो मित्रयुश्च यः ॥

सावर्णिः सौमदत्तिश्च सुशर्मा शांशपायनः ।
एते शिष्या मम प्रोक्ताः पुराणेषु दृढव्रताः ॥
त्रिभिस्तत्र कृतास्तिस्रः संहिता पुनरेव हि ।
काश्यपः संहिताकर्ता सावर्णिः शांशपायनः ॥
मातृका तु चतुर्थी स्यात् चतस्रो मूलसंहिताः ।
सर्वास्ताहि चतुष्पादाः सर्वाश्चैकार्थवाचकाः ॥
पाठान्तरे पृथग्भूताः वेदशाखा यथातथा ।
चतुःसहस्रिकाः सर्वाः शांशपायनिकांकृते ॥
लौमहर्षणिकामूलास्ततः काश्यपिका परा ।
सावर्णिका तृतीया ता ऋजुवाक्यार्थमंडिताः ॥
शांशपायनिका चान्या नोदनार्थविभूषिताः ।

These works have been completely swallowed up in the great growth of later years. But it is not quite hopeless to recover the larger portion of the old work by a little intelligent hard work on the available Puranas. This original single Purana, which in the hands of the grand pupils of Vyasa became four, went on expanding into 18, then 36, then 54 till now there are over 60 of them. The original 4000 shlokas have grown into over ten lakhs of verses. A single minor Purana, like the Shivarahasya, contains one lakh and fifty thousand verses. In their modern shape they have become mutually hostile also. While long passages are almost identical in the major Puranas they have introduced much sectarian and other extraneous matter, which gives each a peculiar complexion. Even so late as the date of the Maha-Bhasya (Circa 200 B. C.) there is only one Purana;

the word being used in that classic in the singular number. It is further generally found coupled with Itihasa. It would seem that very ancient 'history' was Purana, while contemporary history was Itihasa. The prophetic strain in the Puranas is decidedly a later interpolation. The discrepancies in them are due to one or the other having been recast in places and times distant from the scenes described therein and the consequent ignorance of the redacters. The genealogical list of the Magadha Emperors down to the day of Chandragupta is fairly accurate and the presumption therefore, is that their redaction took place in Magadha, in the days when Buddhism was decaying, and Pushyamitra, under the guidance of Patanjali, performed old vedic sacrifices, and supported the movement for the recasting of the old literature into its modern shape, which has become the basis of post-vedic Hindusim. It was this recast version of the original that became the parent of all the later Puranas.

CAUSES OF MULTIPLICATION OF THE PURANAS.

This multiplication of the one into the many was brought about by various causes. After the break-up of the strong centralised government of Chandragupta, communication between the different parts of the empire became difficult; and many small independent States, with divergent State-worships and interests were set up. It became necessary to find ancient authority for local dynastic genealogies and local cults. The easiest way was to interpolate them into the Puranas. Centuries passed, the existence of the original was completely forgotten, and each cult and place evolved a Purana of its own. A precise statement covering the whole ground is not possible and will probably never be possible, but an approximate statement will become possible when all these Puranas are published in really critical editions. One might almost say that no two manuscripts of any Purana are exactly the same.

In the orthodox learning the Puranas are grouped together in three sets of six each, according as they are Sattvic, Rajasic or Tamasic, *i. e.*, devoted to Vishnu, Brahma or Shiva.

THE WRONG AND THE RIGHT WAYS OF DEALING WITH THE PURANAS

These works, if properly handled, should yield plenty of important data for the history of the post-Vedic Hindu civilisation and its vicissitudes, and also a fair amount of historical matter. But orthodoxy, unfortunately, forgetful or ignorant of the great fact that the emotional outlook of the composers of the Puranas was far different to that of the present day, finds itself in a serious plight in its attempts to defend the conduct of the Gods, heroes and rishis as delineated in them, conduct which often outrages the moral sense of those days. That the emotional outlook has changed very completely even within the last few hundred years, is shown clearly by the tradition which ascribes to Shankaracharya the horrible brutality of boiling alive in cauldrons of oil his Jaina opponents. Modern orthodox sentiment, when pressed, would explain away all such statements in the Shankara-digvijaya as rhetorical nonsense; because in the modern surroundings of peace-times, it feels ashamed of the idea of a venerated ascetic philosopher behaving like a savage Mongol, or a Roman Catholic Inquisitor; yet indications are plentiful that if theological 'war-times' supervened, these same orthodox gentlemen would not miss any opportunity of behaving literally like the controversialist Shankara of legend, even as very civilised nations murder each other in war.

The attempt of "allegorisers" to read esoteric significance in the Puranas is palpably absurd, so also on the other hand, is the view of "literalists" like Dayanand Saraswati who condemn them wholesale as all lies. Neither of these is a new attitude. Greece illustrates them in the days before Alexander, when Plato condemned in the most scathing terms the works of Homer and Hesiod. To judge these works from the standpoint either of allegory or of literature is not fair. They are not full of 'facts' as the historian and the scientist understand that term. Few of their 'facts' have gone through the formality of *taking place*. They are to be judged from the standpoint of 'ideal' probability! Truth here does not mean what *was* or *is*, but only something which denotes, with some approach to fidelity, the great essential motives and impulses, passions and principles, which shape the lives of men and women. Their interest to us moderns is largely psychological, as a faithful reflex of the minds of our ancestors, and of their methods of conveying all sorts of teachings to the masses. To the extent these works fulfil these purposes they are true and useful, they are a possession for ever ; to the extent they deviate from this canon, they are false and mischievous. Their value lies not in their record of 'facts' but in the delineation of the inner springs of human actions, which change not from age to age. If these books are handled in the spirit in which great books of literature are handled—say for instance, Shakespeare—then will they yield their full values but handled as accurate chronicles of 'facts,' that is to say, of things which have gone through the formality of taking place, they will ever remain a serious stumbling block to Hindu progress. Not by 'esoteric' explanations can a path be cut out of this jungle.

A LIST OF PURANAS.

Below is given a list of all the known Puranas, with the number of verses, within brackets, as known either from the Puranas themselves or from other sources. No attempt is made to classify them into sets of 18 each, or of 6 each, for there is great diversity in the matter. The Sthala-Puranas or Mahatmyas are not enumerated here, because their number is legion ; but their importance is great; they are a sort of historico-geographical guide-books of Pre-Musalman India.

1. Brahma (10,000), 2. Padma (55,000), 3. Vishnu (23,000), 4. Shiva (24,000), 5. Bhagavata

(18,000), 6. Narada (25,000), 7. Markandeya (9,000), 8. Agni (15,400), 9. Bhavishya (14,500), 10. Brahma-Vaivarta (18,000), 11. Linga (11,000), 12. Varaha (24,000), 13. Skanda (81,100), 14. Vamana (10,000), 15. Kurma (17,000), 16. Matsya (14,000), 17. Garuda (19,000), 18. Brahmanda (12,000), 19 Shivarahasya (1,50,000), 20. Vishnurahasya, 21. Sanat Kumara, 22. Narasinha, 23. Brihannaradiya, 24. Durvasas, 25. Kapila, 26. Vayu (24,000), 27. Bhargava, 28. Varuna, 29. Kalika, 30. Samba, 31. Nandi, 32. Saura, 33. Parashara, 34. Vashistha, 35, Devi-Bhagavata (18,000), 36. Ganesh, 37. Hamsa, 38. Mudgala, 39. Renuka, 40. Vishnu-Dharmottara, 41. Shivadharmottara, 42. Kumara, 43. Ambika, 44. Marichi, 45. Aushanasa, 46. Maheswara, 47. Laghu-Narada, 48. Pashupata, 49. Kalki, 50. Aditya, 51. Kali, 52 Atma, 53. Yoga-vasishtha or Maharamayana (32,000), 54. Adi, 55. Brihat-Dharma, 56. Basava, 57 Nandikeshvara, 58. Surya, 59. Manava, 60, Kankala, 61. Gada, 62. Brihaspati.

The above list has been compiled largely from catalogues in the hope that attention would be called to this neglected sphere of Sanskrit studies, and an effort made to get together as many good and complete manuscripts of these from all parts of the country as possible for purposes of a serious study of them.

THE POINTS OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE VEDAS AND THE PURANAS.

A few words of comparison indicating some of the important differences between the Vedas and the

Puranas would not be amiss here. The wild chronology of the Purana, manipulating millions and billions of years; its endless rotation of Yugas, its doctrine of the perfection of humanity in the first age, and steady deterioration in the succeeding ages; its looseness of sex morals from the standpoint of modern theoretically recognised—and practically violated—conventions; its extraordinary polygamy extending to hundreds and thousands of wives; its figures for the length of human life running into thousands of years; its Rakshasas etc., of monstrous shapes; its geography; its stories of creation and so on are utterly different from the Vedic ideas on the same subject, where they can be had. A hundred years is the standard length of life in the Vedas, and not one person is mentioned who has lived to be even 150; while lives of ten thousand and sixty thousand years are quite ordinary in the Satya and Treta Yugas of the Puranas. Polygamy does not run to more than 2 or 3 wives. The Rakashasas seem only a particular race of men physically no way different from the other human beings, all the difference being in the ways of living. There is no mention of Yugas and their characteristics, so prominent a feature of the non-vedic literature. There is no mention of the Avataras, whether 10 or 24—all this being a later fabrication. A comparative study of the Vedas and the Puranas would be an eye-opener both to the old-world orthodox pandit, who as a rule is innocent of all Vedic studies, as also to the English-educated Hindu, who in his ignorance of both Veda and Purana makes a sad mess of the whole when he does not ignore both altogether. The mass of the people who read their vernaculars only are in an equally bad plight; while the uneducated masses, do not at all trouble their heads about these, but take on trust all the nonsense that the ill-educated and mostly selfish priests, astrologers and Purana-reciters choose to stuff into their simple and too receptive heads.

Section 4.

THE TANTRAS

The Agamas or Tantras are works which, while dealing largely with the methods of getting into touch with super-normal existences in various ways, often contain Pauranic and Smriti matter as well. There are hundreds of these works, but as they are kept very secret by their owners, the outside non-tantric world knows little about them, and as the matter of many of them is very unsavoury they have all been neglected by Orientalists. There is an immense amount of material in them for the anthropologist and the student of the history of religious development and of magic, and it should not be allowed to remain unexplored much longer. There is enough material available in the public libraries to make a good beginning.

Traces of this Agama or Tantric form of worship are found in the Vedas. Its root lies in the far back days of Bharatavarsha, when the Sankhya philosophy, with its theory of Purusha and Prakriti, had not been absorbed in the Buddhist and Jaina and Vedanta reformations; and, as it touched one of the deepest springs of human life, it has been developing with tropical luxuriance throughout the various epochs of Indian history, so that now it has come to permeate modern Hindusim through and through. All Hindu ceremonies, not excluding even the comparatively old Sandhya, are more Tantric to-day than Vedic. Even the Buddhist religion has almost succumbed to its influence—witness the worship of Tara and other female divinities by the Northern Buddhists.

The growth of Agama has been mainly in three directions—(1) the Vama or left hand; also called 'Kaula' and 'Vira; (2) the Dakshina or 'Righthand'; also known as Samaya, and (3) the Mishra (mixed) which combines elements from the above two. The Vama is supposed to be much more effective than the latter, chiefly because the use of intoxicating drinks and the sexual aberrations associated with it produce states of nervous disturbance aping the nervous exaltation of the true mystic; but it is rightly condemned by all upright people.

The Dakshina-marga, though free from the grossness and bestiality of the Kaulas, has not escaped the influence of a low view of life: it fails to rise to that which is above all mundane valuation, it contents itself with the things of the market-place, and barters its higher birthright for the perishable things of the earth. This reduction of pure spiritual worship to a religion of sensual materialism was clearly shewn when the men of a later age added to the famous hymn to Durga,—the Saptashati—a grovelling prayer for the boon of personal beauty, of physical strength, of a beauteous wife, of name and fame, of conquest over enemies. Wherein is the difference between this and the teaching of Charvaka who also, asks for nothing else than a well-satisfied physical existence? The true Agama view is set forth by one of the Shankaracharyas when he pours his heart out in a hymn of touching pathos—"O world-mother, hearken unto me, thy most wayward child. I desire not wealth, nor wife, not Mukti even; but what do I desire is to serve Thee and Thee only, for the sake of uttermost service alone."

The pure Agama has degenerated into a magical ceremonialism, sometimes of the lowest kind—the poisonous fumes of which are everywhere choking a truly religious national life, having been industriously disseminated by a corrupt and selfish priesthood amongst an ignorant population. All this has been far reaching in its effects, as the source of this form of worship lies in the deep-seated wants and cravings of the lower and evil part of human nature. These cravings have to be taken into account in all rational dealing with religions. In fact the Tantras are a regression to the barbarous practices of the early tribal days. The Vedas too have a primitive cult of materiality. But it is a healthy materiality. They pray for wives, and children and cattle and abundant rain and corn and health and strength and general increase of happiness and vitality in a normal way; and they express appreciation of and deep delight in communion with nature and its forces anthropomorphised as Gods of high and low degree, yet all always rooting back in the One Universal Life, Brahman, Atma. But the degeneration of this normal materiality into cults of abnormal aberrations of the appetites seems to have been caused by the strong barbarian influences surrounding and almost suffocating the Aryan element which gradually began to lose its original vitality and vigour under the tremendous pressure of the heathendom it was endeavouring to assimilate to itself. Understanding this, we cannot attach any blame to those distant ancestors who unconsciously underwent such degradation. But the same exoneration cannot be extended to the modern custodian of the scripture, because he is conscious of the distinction between the Right and its opposite, the Left and wrong. The adult may not play the pranks of the babe. He does so at his peril.

The best known Tantras are the Yamalas and the Samhitas; the Meru; the Vamakeshvara; the Spandapradipika; the Lalitasahasranama with Bhaskara's Bhasya; the Panchastavi and their Bhasayas; the Saundaryalahari with Lakshmidharas Bhashya, Agastya Sutras, the Yogini-Hridaya and its tika, the Setubandha, the Maha-nirvana Tantra, the Shat-chakra-pradipika etc. Sir John G. Woodroffe, under the pseudonym of Arthur Avalon has brought out excellent editions and English translations of some important Tantra works.

Section 5

THE LAW DIGESTS

Next, there are a large number of Nibandhas, Digests of Hindu Law, some of them of enormous extent. These too are recognised as authentic sources of Hindu practice; but like other works they are often mutually contradictory, and being the product of a very late stage of Hindu development,* they are the reflexes of the minds of the modern orthodox pandits and all their narrow subtlety of intellect.

Section 6

THE RAMAYANA AND THE MAHABHARATA

I have left to the last the two works which have had the most wide-reaching effects on the moulding, of Hinduism and Hindu character for at least the last two thousand years. These works are the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

The Ramayana is ascribed to the Rishi Valmiki who according to the ancient legends was in his early life, a loose-liver, a cruel heartless hunter—a vyadha and a non-aryan. This tradition of his being a non-aryan does not seem to be correct in view of the statement made nineteen hundred years ago by Ashvaghosha in his Buddhacharita that he was a descendant of the Rishi Chyavana :—

वाल्मीकि नादश्च ससर्ज पद्यं जग्रन्थ यन्न च्यवनो महर्षिः (१, ४२).

---

* In fact they all date from about the period of the first Musalman invasion of India.

Incidentally this should also dispose of the error that has arisen somehow that Chyavana has also composed a Ramayana the above quoted verse distinctly says that what Chyavana could not do that Valmiki has done, and the author goes on to mention half a dozen other instances of greatness achieved by descendants, which greatness was denied to their ascendants. The story of his being an evil man in early life and the paramour of a Shudra woman from whom he had many children and his conversion to better ways is told in the Adhyatma Ramayana Balkanda, Chapter 6, Verses 65—86. After his conversion to good ways, he composed the Ramayana out of the stories he heard from Brahma and from Narada, which probably means, that the story was current in the spoken dialects of those days, as the story of Bharthari (Bhartrihari) is current now-a-days, and has as many variations, as there are singers of it. The " Song of Bharthari " is sung by wandering minstrels to the accompaniments of the Sarangi; and these bards are known in Upper India as *Kingdi-walas*. So, apparently, in times much further back ' the Story of Rama ' was sung from door to door by *Kushilavas*, minstrels. This word came to be split up, in strange fashion, into Kusha and Lava and the names given to the two minstrel boys whom Valmiki took with him to the court of Ram Chandra to sing. Some people think that the original story was most likely a Dravidian song-story telling of the ruthless persecution of their race and high material civilisation by the converts to the Vedic fire-cult, which story would be familiar to Valmiki in his 'unregenerate' days, and which he later 'Aryanised' and worked up in Sanskrit in favour of the allies of his later Rishi days, condemning non-vedic folk as Rakshasas etc., by twisting the story round completely. But this seems to be too far-fetched an explanation and not called for by any facts. The main facts of the story as now current are perfectly natural and intelligible and describe a domestic tragedy in a royal house in Northern India resulting in great adventures which had for consequence the alliance of at least two great Aryan leaders with a great population of aboriginal inhabitants of the South, and the consequent destruction of the outposts (by means of which the Rakshasa nation, having its capital in another continent Lanka, occupied and kept under military subjection, the country of India) and then the overthrow of the main Rakshasa power itself.

The differences in the story as given by Valmiki and as given by others for instance, Vyasa and Kalidas etc.,—to say nothing about the Dasaratha Jataka or the Jaina Ramayana of Hem Chandra—is most likely due to, not a mere 'lapse of memory' but to their having embodied different versions of the story in their works. We can see for ourselves how widely different is Tulsi Das' work from Valmiki's. The former expressly says that he has drawn from *many* other sources and not relied solely on Valmiki. That

Valmiki's Ramayana is not the only ancient one is a fact well-known to Sanskritists. So late, as the last quarter of the 18th century there were more than twenty Ramayanas in the unique library of Kavindracharya Saraswati located in the garden known as the "Vedanti-ka-bag." on the confluence of the Varuna and the Ganga in Benares. I give below their names:—

1. Agniveshya, 2. Shuka, 3. Adhyatma, Mrikandoo, 5. Vasishtha, 6. Samgraha, 7. Kakabhushundi, 8. Vyasa, 9. Valmiki Krita Natak Ramayana, 10. Vibhishana, 11. Brahma, 12. Shiva, 13 Agasti, 14. Shesha, 15. Agama, 16. Karma, 17. Skanda, 18. Paulastya, 19. Aruna, 20. Bharata, 21. Dharma, 22. Adbhuta, 23. Gayatri.

There is said to be one by Hanuman also. The names are given here in the hope that people interested in such subjects may know what to search for and bring to light.

It may also be pointed out that Valmiki does not lay stress on the point that the work is *History*. It is the Adi-Kavya—the first poem. The present day orthodoxy continues to call it Adi Kavya, but also pins its faith to it as History. In fact its "History" is of a nature similar to what I have said above about the Puranas being "history."

There are, at least, three clearly marked rescensions of it, each differing from the other widely. The first and the seventh cantos are distinctly later additions, while the body of the work has also been tampered with very greatly, though not to the enormous extent that the Mahabharata has been. So late as the time of Uttara Rama Charita, Valmiki's work was divided into Adhayas and not into Kandas and Sargas, as now, is clearly proved by the references to that work in the drama. In studying the Ramayana, it should be remembered that it is not a strict history but a poem. Its primary and professed purpose is didactic. It describes the good and the evil emotions that sway human beings. It may be noted, incidentally, that it does so in a more stratified and less complex form than the Mahabharata. The best available book on it, to one who knows only English, is C. V. Vaidya's "The Riddle of the Ramayana." If the author could have taken account of German, Italian and French criticisms also, the work would have been much superior to what it is. It ought to be read by all those persons who connot read the original with ease, and they will find enough material in it to shake rudely their ideas about the state of society and the general condition of affairs as depicted in the Ramayana. A few points are noted below to whet appetite. Sita offers a thousand jars of liquor (Sura) to the holy Ganga on her safe return; women are depicted as performing Sandhya; women perform agnihotra and other sacrifices with Vedic Mantras on their own account and without their husbands participating in them or even being present; Rama's *eka patni vrata* (only one wife) means that he had only one *married* wife; it does not necessarily mean that he had not concubines as was the custom of that age also, (as of most other ages, unhappily.)

हृष्टाः खलु भविष्यन्ति रामस्य परमाः स्त्रियः ।
अप्रहृष्टाः भविष्यन्ति स्नुषास्ते भरतर्षभ ॥

Sita may be referring to this fact in the 28th chapter of the Sundara Kanda. This vicious custom is not yet dead among the ruling princes and zemindars of India (or of other countries.) Dasaratha had besides his three wives, three hundred and fifty concubines. The story of Ahalya differs widely from the popular belief on the subject. She was not turned into stone, nor did the touch of Rama's feet give her back her human shape. It was Rama and Lakshmana who touched her feet. The Avatara theory is a later interpolation and has not been worked in successfully. Ravana is not depicted as a monster of many thighs, arms and heads. It is curious that so early as the days of Kalidasa, there should have crept in startling discrepancies between this older work and his own Raghuvamsha. In Valmiki's version Sita is not an Avatara of Lakshmi, but is indentified with one Vedavati. Her words to Lakshmana saying that he desired Rama's death, in order to be able to marry her (Sita,) show that such remarriages were possible. They are common to-day among the lower castes. It was the Devas who called Sura or Varuni (liquor) anindita (blameless) and drank freely of it; and hence got their name of Suras (*vide*, Valmiki, Balakanda Sarga 45) and it was the Daityas who declined the drink and so came to be known as Asuras.

In the fourteenth chapter of Aranya-Kanda Manu is said to be the *daughter* of Daksha, to whose great-grandson Kashyapa she was married along with her seven other sisters, *i.e.*, they were all married to their grandson! The children born of Manu to Kashyap are known as Manavas, human beings. The four sons of Dasharatha were born to his three queens as the result of drinking a specially consecrated *Charu* (pudding) when he was in his sixty-thousandth year. The ages of his queens are not given. Sita chose Rama by the Swayamvara rite while she was in her fifth year and he in his twelth (Aranya-Kanda Ch. 47.) She became a mother when she was ten-thousand thirty-three years old. It is a strange irony of fate and an object lesson in the evolution of religious beliefs that the very persons who were the inveterate enemies of all holy living, and were ever devising sexual attractions for the ascetic Brahmanas to make them fall into sin, and all for the very love and selfish fear of being dispossessed of their Heaven, should have come to be honoured and worshipped as against the Asuras who opposed the vedic religion on *principle.* There is no mention of temples to Gods. It is not Rama who is a worshipper of Shiva, but Ravana who worships a gold phallus—*Jambu nada-mayam lingam.* Some other characters in the Ramayana, highly idealised later on, appear in a more average garb in Valmiki's work. Sugriva does not compare well with Bali. Bali's dying rebuke to Rama, for not fighting him openly but murdering him from behind a screen, is very poorly answered. The cutting of Shurpanakha's nose and ears, even though she might have frightened Sita severely, can never be justified. Although no doubt, Vibhishana was very justly incensed by the conduct of Ravana, yet it may be said, Vibhishana's conduct was not patriotic. But for the defection of Vibhishana Lanka would not have fallen. That Vibhishana gained his brother's kingdom and his queen Mandodari for his wife may also be counted against him, as showing a selfish motive for his defection. But this would be clearly wrong. Ravana had undoubtedly sinned against Rama and Sita, and would not repent and expiate and had to be slain. His sons sided with him and had to be slain also. Who would be entrusted with the work of the kingdom except Vibhishana? Valmiki's Ramayana clearly shews the evil results of the polygamy of Dasharatha, and portrays the inmates of his palace with very human touches. The very unbecoming language which according to it was used by Sita to Lakshmana, and drove him away to look for Rama with its result in her abduction by Ravana, shews Sita in a human aspect, rather below the average, instead of ideal. The angry and unbrotherly suspicions of Lakshmana and even of Rama towards Bharata all through the period of exile and the ever-present heartache at their privations, which, whenever any trouble arose, found ready utterance from all the three in reiterations of the great sin of Kaikeyi. And what was this sin of her? Had not

Dasharatha promised to her father (as admitted by Rama himself) that the son born from her would be his successor in the kingship? It is Dasharatha who is the arch-sinner and not Kaikeyi, who is more sinned against than sinning. Both Rama and Lakshmana are often inveighing against the lustful infatuation of their aged father for the young and handsome Kaikeyi. Such are some of the other items which make the characters human. Briefly to one who dispassionately and with open eyes reads through the work, for him the ideals would be not so unapproachable as later growths of beliefs have made them. But in such matters the popular instinct is not altogether wrong, which would heighten the ideal side and ignore the weaknesses. Only, complete ignoring of the weaknesses makes knowledge imperfect and so unable to guard against pitfalls. For the purposes of its use as a moral text book historical and sociological side of the Ramayana should not be examined too critically, except by the advanced sociologist, and attention should be concentrated on those points which do not go too much against at least the professions of modern feelings and conscience. What I have said above is only as a warning against the unctuosities of an excessive belief to which the 'devotee' is specially liable, and in consequence of which he makes his ideal so super-human, so very distant from humanity, as to become absolutely incomparable, and unapproachable, and *therefore useless as a standard fit to try and imitate* which in the real significance and value of devotion. Otherwise the Ramayana together with the Mahabharata has the same value in the building up of Hindu culture, as the Bible in that of the Christian and the Qoran of the Islamic civilisation.

We need scarcely examine seriously the popular belief that the Ramayana is the work of the previous Yuga, and so somewhere over 20 lakhs of years old. The age of the work may be approximately fixed by the fact that in the Ayodhya-Kanda, Chapter 109, Buddhism is mentioned as also Chaityas (Bhuddist relic stupas), as also in several other places. This fixes the upward limit. The downward limit is fixed by the mention of Valmiki by Ashvaghosha, an author whose date has been determined to be contemporaneous with that of Kanishka, 1st Century A. C. We may then safely, though roughly, fix about the 3rd Century B. C. as the date of the work.

Another point to remember is that the popular belief that Aryans were more civilised than the non-Aryans in all the arts and conveniences of life is not borne out by the ancient books, and these books are not works of partisans of the non-Aryans, but their enemies the Aryans. The Vedic books delineate a state of much higher material civilisation as belonging to the Dasyus, the Dashas and the other communities they came across and subdued. Similarly the Ramayana shows that while the capital of Ravana was full of all sorts of luxuries, that of Rama was comparatively poor. Certainly the vast hordes of Vanaras who helped Rama to overwhelm Lanka were much poorer than the Rakshasas, in respect of worldly goods, clothing and arms and accoutrements. But they had a much more vigorous vitality. In historical modern times it has often been so; the invaders have often been less civilised than the people invaded. It is a natural case of the 'have-nots' hankering after the goods of the 'haves'. But it must not be forgotten that f. i., the Romans conquered a good bit of 'barbarian' territories before they were overwhelmed by the barbarians in turn. And we see today that the 'higher-civilisation' of the West is exploiting ruthlessly the weaker and the backward races and in some cases with all the savagery and inhumanity of the earlier days.

A list of the Ramayanas has already been given. Two of these may be re-mentioned, the Maha-Ramayana, better known as Yogavashishtha in which Advaita Vedanta with Buddhistic touches here and there and illustrated with wonderful stories in beautiful language, is promulgated in the form of a dialogue between Rama and his family preceptor Vashishtha. This work does not deal with the subject matter of Valmiki's story at all. The Adhyatma Ramayana too devotes much space to philosophy, but gives the outline of Valmiki's story as well.

THE RAMAYANA IN OTHER LANGUAGES.

There are Ramayanas in all the principal languages of India. In Hindi there is the famous Ramayana of Tulasidasa, which is so popular that it might almost be said to be the Veda of 125 millions of the Hindi-speaking peoples of India. It may be noted here in passing, that neither Valmiki nor Tulasidas had named their poems Ramayana. The former's work was styled Paulastya-Vadha and the latter's Rama-Charita-Manas. There is another Hindi Ramayana, that of the poet Keshava Das which is much more learned in style and metre than the work of Tulsidas and almost contemporaneous with it; but not having been written with a didactic purpose nor in the spirit of true Bhakti and its language being exceedingly difficult it has not caught the popular fancy and so is comparatively unknown.

SOME SPECIAL POINTS OF NOTE.

Before passing on from the Ramayana, we may note that it has one important lesson to teach. Ravana was "a Brahman by caste"; and not merely an ordinary Brahmana, but the son of a great Rishi. Yet he and all his kith and kin, who sided with him, were unhesitatingly slain by Rama and Lakshmana, typical Kshatriyas as they were. This shows that Rama and Lakshmana at least, did not carry caste-notions and caste-privilege to those preposterous lengths which they acquired later on: In short, in actual practice there seems to have been, to some extent, *danda-samata* and *vyavahara-samata* (criminal and civil equality) as against the theoretical claims of the law books for *a—samata* (inequality) between the Brahman and the non-Brahman. Another point is that the Vanaras and Rakshasas, 'monkeys and bears' may possibly have been so called because the 'totems' or 'banners' of these races and tribes were these animals. The Jain Ramayana says that the tribes were so-called because they kept large numbers of these animals as pets. We find to-day the British army having regimental 'pets' and such animals are regarded as 'Mascots' and carefully looked after.

THE MAHABHARATA

With regard to the author of this work the bits of information that have been handed down by tradition are; (1) that he was the son of Parashara by a fisher caste girl for whom the Rishi conceived a temporary passion as he was being ferried accross a river by her; (2) that he was the re-arranger of the Vedas and the author of the Mahabharata and the Purana or Puranas; (3) that he was the father of the Kshatriya Dhritarashtra and Pandu and of the Shudra Vidura; and (4) finally that he was in love with a prostitute of Benares and was used to her kicks:—

द्वैपायनो धर्मपरायणश्च रेमे समं काशिषुवेशवध्वा ।
यया हतोभूत् चलनूपुरेण पादेन विद्युल्लतयेवमेघः ॥
(अश्वघोषकृत सौन्दरनन्द ७. ३.)

The Mahabharata, which some modern Orientalists believe to be an earlier work than the Ramayana, orthodoxy believes to have been composed over 5,000 years ago, just about the time the Kali age is believed to have begun. There are very wide differences of readings in the various manuscripts besides the three distinct redactions as mentioned in the work itself.

It is mainly the story of the great war between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. It is called Mahabharata, because the whole feature of Bharatavarsha or India was involved in the mighty struggle. It is full of tales of all sorts of men and women, saints as well as sinners, showing the manifold phases of human life; but running through all these is the supreme teaching that evil is ever short-lived, and that good ultimately prevails. The influence and authority of this book is immense, as is well evidenced by its other title, the 'fifth-veda' Panchamveda. It is an encyclopædia of Indo-Aryan laws, manners, customs, politics, ethics, philosophies, social and religious polity, and serves as a complete repertory of the arts of peace as well as of war. The Bhagavad-Gita is the most important of its many episodes. There can be no doubt that priestly imagination has run riot in the making up of this and other books to the detriment of sober history; yet it would be a great mistake to say that there is no history in it. Eighteen Akshauhinis (army corps) are said to have annihilated each other within 18 days. The akshauhinis are differently calculated. One calculation gives for the 18 the total of 3,93,660 elephants, 17,55,620 horses, and 82,67,099 men. Another gives something like 40,00,000 men.

THE HARIVAMSHA.

The Harivamsha is a sort of appendix to the Mahabharata. It is an account of the rise and fall of Shri Krishna's family; its chief point of difference from the Bhagavata consists in the entire absence of that impassioned Bhakti which is so predominant in the latter. There is a widespread feeling even among Pandits, that the Bhagavata is a recent compilation, later than the other Puranas, probably produced in an age when Krishna worship had become strongly tinged with elements of passionate love, in place of a purer spiritual devotion. It has also to be remembered that different manuscripts show serious and sometimes vital differences of reading and that there is no critically printed edition. I was told by the librarian of the Government Sanskrit College, Benares, the late Mahamahopadhyaya Vindeshwari Prasad Dvivedin, that in a very correct ancient manuscript in the library, the GopikaGitam and many other such episodes are not to be found.

THE MAHABHARATA AND THE BRIHAT-KATHA

To the student interested in the causes of popularity or the oblivion of books, a fact of some psychological interest is supplied by the respective fates of the Mahabharata and the Brihat-Katha. The former work, owing to its sacerdotal flavour, was lovingly cherished and embellished by the Brahmanas, and, being susceptible of additions holding up vested interests, was gradually transformed from an original of only about 8000 verses into one of 24000 verses by Vaishampayana, and finally by Sauti, to its present size, of over one lakh of verses and has taken completely the character of a religious book. The Brihat-Katha on the other hand, being a purely secular work, dealing with the every day life of the people and their folklore, and written in one of the current speeches of the period, was gradually allowed to get lost completely. It was an enormous work, consisting of 700,000 shlokas, in the Paishachi language, by Gunadhya. The Paishachi language according to Sir George Grierson is spoken by the Kafirs—a tribe inhabiting the tract of land lying between Kashmir and Afghanistan, and now known as Kafiristan. They were non-Muslims, as their very name shows, and preserved almost up to now, a very large amount of this ancient tribal beliefs and practices. They are now being rapidly and thoroughly Islamised under the tremendous pressure of Afghanistan, to the tender mercies of whose late ruler Habibullah they were handed over by the British Government in the last days of the nineteenth century. These people are evidently the lineal descendants of the Paishacha tribe, and whose language was known as Paishachi. The latter-day Hindus having lost touch with these and other similar border tribes, like the Bhutas, the Pretas, etc., lumped them all together and turned them into fairy-tale goblins of hideous and disgusting behaviours. The Katha-Sarit-Sagara is a Sanskrit abridgment of the last 100,000 verses of that work in about 22,000 shlokas—the size of the second Mahabharata—and is the work of Somadeva of Kashmir. We owe it to the enlightened curiosity of a Queen of Kashmir, the wife of King Harsha. The Brihat-Katha being neither in the 'sacred' speech nor treating of 'sacred' subjects was doubly condemned by the priest-custodians of India's literary treasures. Gunadhya, who had already been persecuted and forced to resign his ministership and retire from the Court of King Satavahana (B. C. 200) on finding that his work also was meeting the fate of its author, is said to have himself destroyed six cantos containing 600,000 verses. Only the last canto containing 100,000 verses was saved. The probability however, is that it was not the author who destroyed his work, but his persecutors who did so, and his few friends could save barely a seventh of the work. From this three Sanskrit abstracts have been prepared in later days. The best is by Somadeva; it was written between A. C. 1063-1081 and called the Katha-Sarita-Sagara; it has been printed in Bombay, and also been translated into English by C. H. Tawney and in Hindi by Rama Krishna Varma of Benares. Another abstract the Brihat-Katha-Manjari composed a few years later, but much inferior both in quality and quantity, is that of Kshmendra, also published in Bombay. A third has been recovered from Nepal; it shows wide divergences from both the above, and is therefore of great value. Portions recovered (about 8,000 versus) have been published in France. It is a tremendous loss, that of the original Brihat Katha of Gunadhya to the Folklorist, to the Philologist, to the Ethnologist, and to the historian of India of those days. The Buddhist Jataka tales can scarcely be said to fill this gap. Professor J. S. Speyer of Holland has written an informing book "Studies on the Katha-Sarit-Sagara," on the subject; he would bring down the date of the Brihat-Katha to the 4th century A. C., the French preface to the third version, the Brihat Katha-Shloka-Sangraha, is also instructive.

THE EVOLUTION OF GODS

The treatment meted out to this work by the Brahmanas and their docile pupils as compared to the way the Mahabharata has been treated, has its lessons in the psychology of priest-craft for the earnest enquirer after truth. We are now slowly beginning to learn from the new-born science of Anthropology, that it is not the gods of a tribe that build up its ritual, but that on the contrary it is the rituals that build up the gods. In the earlier days of tribal existence, before the classification of thought has begun, they are mere shadow forms, who, as ritual goes on steadily losing its original import, go on steadily densifying; till in a later age they get precipitated into hard, solid, concrete shapes fully anthropomorphised. As Homer and Hesiod were the creators of the Greek Gods, so may Valmiki and Vyasa be said to be the creators of the Hindu Gods. From them has sprung our modern Sanatana Dharma. They remodelled the Vedic cult and gave birth to what one might call neo-Aryanism, with all its enormous influence on the later evolution of society, literature and religion. From this it will also become clear why there could be no temples and idols in the very early days, for only *after* the Gods had become concrete personalities could the earlier methods of worship be transformed into image worship. Idolatory represents a natural stage in the evolution of religion. Prof. Gilbert Murray's illuminating books, "Four Stages of Greek Religion" and "The Rise of the Greek Epic" as also Prof. Hopkin's "The Great Epic" and C. V. Vaidya's "Epic India" as also his "Mahabharata" should all be carefully studied by the earnest enquirer.

Section 7

LANGUAGE AND SCRIPT.

We may now attempt to outline in brief the important teachings contained in these books; but before going on to do so, it would be well to say a few words about the language and script in which all this vast literature, religious and secular, is written. The sacerdotal teaching that Sanskrit is the Devabhasa the language of the Gods, and is the first language in point of time may be quietly dismissed now, without any attempt to refute it. This refutation has been done sufficiently by History. The faith of all 'revelationists' whether they be Hindu, Musalman or Christian has been the same with regard to their favourite language. The Christian priest used to believe and teach that Hebrew was the language of

God and the Musalman believed Allah spoke nothing else than Arabic. This childish faith and still more childish endeavour to force it on those who dared to disbelieve it, by the force of social and physical penalties of boycott are unhappily not quite dead yet. The still more "persuasive" argument of the sword and fire are happily now at an end in most, though not in all, parts of the world, for the time being at least. The Musalman unfortunately has not yet learnt to be tolerant, and is ever ready, wherever he can with impunity, to offer his time-honoured choice between the sword and the Koran.

The word Sanskrit is a later coinage; it is unknown to the Vedic literature. It means, 'embellished' 'polished' 'adorned'; so something which is artificial and not natural; a thing brought into existence by the efforts of man. This name itself implies that the language was the language of a limited group, of the privileged few, and not of the people at large. It was not the vernacular, not the mother-tongue, of even a privileged caste. For it was not every Brahmaṇa who could speak it or understand it, as is shown by the directions given in Manu on the subject of greetings to an unlearned Brahmana. The directions are that if he does not know the priestly language he is to be greeted in the vernacular and not made to feel small by being greeted in the language of the Gods. The ladies of the highest class caste always speak Prakrit: Sanskrit is only a second language, as is shown by our dramatic literature. This ought to prove, if more proof were wanted, that the language was the language of the religious books only, the knowledge of which was limited to the priestly class who studied it for professional purposes and to such other Brahmanas and Kshatriyas as had the leisure and the inclination to study it for cultural purposes. In short, it was a Hieratic language. The language of the people was always styled Prakrita and there were many kinds of it.

But neither is Sanskrit an absolutely new invention; it has grown steadily out of some ancient dialect, which has now perished utterly. Nor is Sanskrit the mother of Greek, Latin, Lithuanian etc., on the one side, nor of the various Prakrits of India on the other. All of these have developed on their own lines, of course with interactions on each other as of sister dialects. Probably, there never was one common mother. The two earliest variations of these original sister dialects that have been preserved are the Avesta, the language of the earliest Parsi religious books, and the 'Sanskrita' of the Vedic Samhitas.

That the language of these Vedic Samhitas is not a primitive language, but a highly polished literary dialect, is borne out by the fact that unlike primitive poesy it is not confined to a single metre, and some of the numerous metres used, are highly complex, and all are composed according to regular metrical canons, license being eschewed.

We also know that these Samhitas have undergone numerous revisions and therefore very little if any, of the really *first songs*, unworked over, unpolished, could have been left.

This earliest literary dialect of these lost songs, which was based on the spoken language of the people who originated the fire-cult which later became a very complex and all-absorbing affair, also perished; how and when and why it is not easy to answer. But perish it did is certain, because the third stage, that of the Brahmanas, shows clearly that to the authors of these even the Samhitas (the second stage) conveyed no definite and certain meaning. As pointed out above, the Padapatha, with its uncertainties, is a standing proof that the language of the Samhitas even had become dead. The Nirukta mentions by name seventeen teachers earlier than the author himself. The book is a repertory of all sorts of curious, farfetched, absurd and contradictory explanations going to show again that there was no authoritative traditional explanation available at the time.

The next stage of the language was the Brahmana period. A jealously guarded close corporation produced these books. They are not the works of single authors but of syndicates, if one might use a modern term. The people who were using the language had acquired it labouriously in the 'schools', and the language was very different from that of the Samhitas. In course of time the influence of the mother-tongues of the priestly composers of these books produced phonetic, lexical and grammatical changes in the language till there resulted the 'classical' Sanskrit of the Smritis, of the Kavyas and the Puranas. At this stage the language got petrified by the efforts of a host of dictionary and grammar writers. Panini (circa 500 B. C.) was the latest of these grammarians; he digested once for all, the works of his predecessors. Since his days no deviations from his iron rules are tolerated, every such being promptly pushed aside as incorrect. Modern Sanskrit must have been in existence for not less than five hundred years prior to the date of Panini, to make possible so many predecessors and the change of the language from the Brahmana into the Kavya style. The Hind has always been a good linguist. As to-day, a foreign language, English is used by him almost like his mother-tongue, so a few centuries earlier was Arabic and Persian used, still earlier Chinese and Tibetan. Naturally Sanskrit, being the language of his sacred books and also economically a necessity for the Brahmans, was cultivated with even greater vigour and came very nigh being a second mother-tongue to him; hence the facility with which the language has always been used in compositions; but the artificial character of the literary works and their remoteness from daily life cannot be hidden by any amount of assertions to the contrary.

SANSKRIT AND THE PRAKRITS

While the course of development of that early spoken dialect of the people of the fire-cult, has culminated through the vedic Mantras into the grammar-ridden, lexicon-imprisoned, wholly artificial, and highly complex, yet also truly polished and finished, standardised, literature-stabilising, culture-fixing, unifying and powerful modern Sanskrit, the other dialects spoken in India at that very early date have followed a different course of development. To go into the details of the literary Prakrits of the Sanskrit dramas of the Hindu books, of the Jain books. and of the Buddhist books (generally known as Pali) and of the various speeches current to-day and their inter-relations, is outside the purpose of the book, and would besides require a very large amount of space. One thing however, needs to be constantly remembered, and it is this, that neither the various Prakritas nor the current vernaculars are the daughters of Sanskrit, though more or less they have all been flavoured very highly by it; nor are they Sanskrit in its decrepit old age. It is because this fact is not given its due weight that we find a general failure to produce really accurate grammars of the vernaculars. The settled preconception, about Sanskrit being the mother of the spoken vernaculars of Upper India, results in ever renewed attempts to fit these languages on the framework supplied by Panini, and in the as constant failures to meet the situation truly. If the procrustean grammatical bed were to be discarded and a genuine attempt made to discover grammars from the *literature* of the language with help of comparative Phililogy, Phonetics etc., more useful work would be produced.

Because the modern Hindu is obsessed by the idea of Sanskrit being the Deva-Vani, the language of the Gods, he "seeing sees not" that Sanskrit is artificial and it is Prakrit that is natural. Even so late as the time of Yashovarman, King of Kanoaj, his court poet Vakpatiraj, pupil of the great dramatist Bhavabhuti, who was a pupil of Kumarilswamin recognizes the true position of Prakrit, in his Prakrit poem Grandavaho written full 1200 years ago in which he celebrates the conquest of magadha-Bengal by his Patron. He in verse 93 asserts "all languages are born of Prakrit etc." The Sanskrit commentator explains "all languages" to mean Sanskrit, Apabhramsha, Paishacha etc. This clearly shows that by then history had not been wholly forgotten and the position of Prakrit was duly recognised. It is also clear that by then Prakrit was also becoming—if it had not already become—a literary language. It was superseded by various spoken languages and dialects which had already been born.

THE SCRIPT.

Coming now to the various scripts in which the works are written, we find that one of these has been selected for special honour and is called the Deva-nagari, or the Deva-akshara, which both mean roughly 'the script of the Gods.' The priestly faith which has been sedulously promulgated is that there never was a time when the Aryans were not possessed of a scientific alphabet. The Tantras improve upon this by pointing out the anatomical and physiological connection of the human organs of speech, which the order of succession in which our alphabet is arranged, and the 'eternal' connection of the *forms* of the script with the *way* the wind is expelled from the speech organs. Some other wiseacres build up the alphabet and its written forms respectively from the various permutations and combinations of sounds which make up the sound of OM and of the artificial pieces into which the written form of the letter has been ingeniously divided by them. Others still, derive the whole from the shape and the note of the peacock. There could scarcely be a more telling example of the acute and perverse ingenuity of at least one section of the Hindus and its way of attacking such problems. One need scarcely say that all this is sheer nonsense. Writing was unknown in the very earliest days. No proofs have yet been forthcoming to show that it was known before B. C. 1000. It was not an indigenous invention; but was brought from outside by the Panis, the Vaishyas, the traders. It was taken over, only after a hard struggle, by the Brahmanas and with grave misgiving, as is well shown by the feeling still in existence that the vedas should not be committed in writing and still less printed; the tantric mantras being still kept so secret that they are only whispered into the ears of the pupil. The resistance on the part of the priest is easy to understand. It is only selfish human nature prompted by the unerring feeling that once the knowledge is committed to paper, it will irrevocably become public property, and the closely ringed monopoly which has brought them reputation and gain will be broken never to be re-ringed. How jealously the knowledge was guarded and what fearful penalties were meted out to those who being outside the privileged circle aspired to get it is fully exemplified by the Hindu Sutra and Smriti writers. The Shudra's ears were to be filled with molten lead, his tongue was to be cut out and finally he was to be split in twain. It was so in Rome. The Old Roman Laws which had for generations continued to be the monopoly of the Consuls were engraved on stone and made public only after strenuous struggles. Almost similar barbarous conditions prevailed in America. Till very lately, it was death to teach a Negro. The whole story is told in a book of wonderful power—"Uncle Tom's Cabin"—which was a potent factor in the emancipation of the Negro. Even in this twentieth century it is very difficult for Asiatics and Africans to get entrance into the educational establishments of the Whites. All diffusion of knowledge is ever a process of democratization, breaking down the privileges of the elect, who have so long fattened on it at the expense of the people. The first writing down of the old tribal lore was probably even more revolutionary than the printing press, which has only given a tremendous impetus to a revolution begun long ago. Of course the wide diffusion of superficial knowledge has its dangers also. But the excessive jealousy displayed by the custodians of the vedas cannot be justified and widespread ignorance is undoubtedly the greater of the rival evils.

For commerce on any extended scale and specially with the distant peoples writing was an absolute necessity. One view is that it was the sea-faring Phoenecians who first invented it, and that the trading Indians learnt it from them. We need not try to decide the matter. But it is fairly certain that there were two forms of writing in the earlier days. The earliest was that known now as the Brahmi and the other a little later in time, is that known at Kharoshtri, that is to say of or from the land of the camel and the donkey possibly the country now known as Kashgar. It is often also called Kharoshthi—" like the form of the lip of the donkey"—but this is incorrect, though supported by some well-known European Orientalists; the other interpretation has a larger consensus of authority in its favour. The score or so of modern Hindu and Buddhist scripts, are all descended from the Brahmi mostly, with some touch of the Kharoshtri. In the beginning even such a thing as the writing from right to left was so unsettled that the Kharoshtri was generally written like Arabic and Persian, from left to right, and Brahmi either way, though mostly from right to left. Who knows that they may not sometimes have also been written in perpendicular columns like the Chinese? Unfortunately the Asoka script, which had the makings of a real alphabet in it, petrified into a syllabary, and all its modern variations have preserved this early undesirable character, and the evolution of the script into a true alphabet was brought to an untimely end. Its long course of evolution can be fairly well studied in the Epigraphical records beginning from the days of Asoka down to our own times. The variation in its development, in the different countries and the different parts of India into which it was carried, is due mostly to the material in which it had to work. Stones, clay and metal-plates, barks and leaves, paper and wooden plates will insensibly force the tracer to modify the picture he is copying on them; so also will the instruments he uses for tracing-stylus, reed, brush, quills, chisel and hammer; the variety of colouring material will also affect the art. So far as I know skins of animals were never used for writing on; though the blood of animals was used as ink.

There is nothing super-human, religious or occult, in the invention and evolution of the alphabet. It arose out of human *worldly* need, it changed its shape from place to place and from time to time, because of material limitations. There is no reason to grow sentimental over any script. It is an instrument for the use of man and it is folly to reverse this relation and make man the instrument of the script. Both Hindus and Musalmans should learn to behave, soberly and reasonably and not break each others' heads in battle over scripts, as they have been threatening to do for some years now - in upper India. Neither Arabic nor Hindi characters are sacrosanct, and it is absurd to spoil good-fellowship over trifles. Did not the English give up their complicated Gothic script completely in favour of the Latin, and is not the Latin script practically the ruling script of the world? The Arabic is a far more imperfect script and takes twice as long to master as the Hindi, and to keep it as the script for all administrative purposes is a wrong to the people. The best interest of India demands that for all administrative purposes and for the purposes of Primary education the multitudinous diversity of alphabets be replaced by the Roman script. Scholars interested in lines of research or persons moved by patriotic motives, and with the necessary leisure would of course continue to learn the scripts needed for the satisfaction of their particular interests. People do not realise the frightful and wholly unprofitable waste of time involved in learning many scripts. It may be that a Sanskrit scholar has to learn 20 different scripts if he wishes to use manuscripts and epigraphical records freely. But it is not necessary that the average Indian with no time to spare from the hard grind of winning his daily food, should remain wholly illiterate because he cannot command the time or the brains to master many scripts. See Rhys David's "Buddhist India." Ch. VII, VIII.

CHAPTER III.

Hinduism: Its Fundamental Teachings.

Section 1.

THE ONE GOD AND THE CHIEF MINOR GODS.

It is next to imposible to disentangle any clear-cut, precise, theology and Pantheon from the enormous mass of literature on the subject. In any process of sifting, eclecticism cannot be avoided, nor is it possible to take an absolutely judicial, neutral, point of view. The Theology, the Pantheon and the Philosophy of us Hindus varies not only according to the caste, and the class in his particular caste to which the individual belongs, but also varies according to time and place and family. But as it is manifestly impossible to digest this whole mass or to treat it in water-tight compartments, it will be attempted to be shewn here in its natural condition of existence, in the best light possible. Mistakes in the treatment are inevitable. The highly specialised philosophic and refined forms of animistic beliefs are not set out here. For them I would refer enquirers to my friend Mr. T. P. Shrinivas Iyengar's "Outlines of Indian Philosophy." Nor are the cruder forms of Animism detailed here. A middle course has been attempted to be steered; this includes the ritualistic theology and Pantheon with the strange juxtaposition of the teachings of the saints.

There is one Supreme Being, "One only without a second." He is spoken of as Brahma in the sacred books, or as the All. He is without beginning or end, without birth, change or death. Everything comes out of Him, lives in Him, and finally resolves into Him, and there is nothing without Him. He is beyond speech and beyond thought, without name and without form, outside time and space.

He appears as Ishvara—God and Maya—Nature; as Name and Form; as Purusha—Spirit and Prakriti—Matter. And these two are ever united, that is, there is no Ishvara without Maya, and no Maya without Ishvara; so no Spirit without Matter, and no Matter without Spirit.

Matter, when changed from its chaotic state in a Pralaya to its organised state in a Kalpa, reveals itself in three strands or aspects called Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Ishvara working through Rajas is Brahma; in his Sattva manifestation, he is Vishnu and in his Tamasa aspect is Shiva. Thus Ishvara reveals Himself in three aspects and Prakriti or Shakti similarly appears as three Beings—Sarasvati, Lakshmi and Parvati.

Besides these three major manifestations there are a number of minor ones. For instance, the eight Vasus, the eleven Rudras, the twelve Adityas and the two Ashvins; also Indra and Prajapati. These are the 33 Devas of the Vedas, which later mythology has swelled into 33 Crores. Even these 33 are as explained by Nirukta, but various appelations, according to differences of function, of three—Agni, Vayu or Indra and Surya ; while these, again, in the earlier days of Hinduism, are the sons of Prajapati. A different explanation is given in the Upanishads.

Indra is the god of the Antarisksha, the 'middle region the atmosphere, and is the king of all the gods. He was a most prominent god in the vedic days and endless are the stories in the Brahmanas and the Samhitas about him. He has been completely displaced in these post vedic days. It was Krishna—the god of Puranic India—who drove him from his place and abolished his worship. Prajapati is the immediate creator of this universe as Brahma is the more distant. He too is now completely forgotten and dethroned. The non-human beings are divided into two groups, namely, the Asuras and the Suras, and they live in the various regions which are counted as fourteen including this earth. Six of these are above this earth and seven below it. But these lower regions are not a sort of hell ; they too are regions of as happy existence as those above the earth.

ASURA AND SURA.

A word here about the etymology of the word Asura would not be amiss ; in fact it would show how far modern Hinduism has travelled since its vedic days. The word Asura is not the negative form of Sura—the A is not a private prefix as the Puranas would have it. Rather this later word Sura, is an artificial construction from the original Asura, which is derived from "Asu"—"the breath" or "life." Its original meaning too has been murdered by the later ignorant orthodoxy of the Puranas and of modern India. Asura was the epithet of the finest conception of a god by the Vedic peoples namely Varuna, the god of righteousness, and also of other gods. It was also applied to the Sun. The Parsi form of the word is Ahura and they call their God Ahuramazd. They are all sun-worshippers and recite their prayer to him morning and evening as we do. How or when or why this startling change came has not been ascertained. If the life history of some of these vedic words could be traced to their periods of origin and again down to their modern usage, many of the problems of religion and mythology and history, which perplex the genuine enquirer and produce strifes and schisms among the "faithful" would be solved. It is more than probable that the results of such thorough enquiry would produce dismay in the ranks of the 'believers.'

These Devas and Asuras are constantly fighting with each other much to the grief of their father, the old Prajapati. The peace of his home is in a constant state of disturbance because their mothers, Diti and Aditi, his two wives are always at daggers-drawn over the doings of one another's children. The business of the Devas (or Adityas, sons of Aditi) seems to be always to put obstacles in the way of a holy life, while the Daityas (sons of Diti) are represented as gentlemen who make it their special business to thwart the bloody vedic sacrifices, so that it is the business of both to plague human beings in different ways. But the Devas can be won over.

THE THREE MAJOR GODS

Coming back to the three major Gods, we find that they occupy very different and very insignificant positions in the Vedas. They are the result of later evolution of theological thought; though perhaps we may say that Agni, Indra and Prajapati correspond respectively to Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

BRAHMA

Brahma is the architect of the Universe; his work consists in making organisms, on the vast as well as the small scale, out of pre-existing matter. Matter evloves "unconsciously" from its causal state *i.e.*, the state of chaos in which it exists during Pralaya—into states in which it can form objects and subserve life. 'Tanmatras', 'Tattvas' and 'Indriyas' are stages in this evolution of matter, which is said to be abuddhi-purva, "unconscious," because it takes, so to say, of itself, under the stress of Universal Consciousness, without the conscious agency of any individual Brahma. The subsequent "conscious" evolution of organism is carried out by Brahma, first through the primal 'mind-born' Rishis and their multifarious progeny and then through the agency of two sets of beings, Asuras & Suras who issuing from the wives of one of the Rishis 'churn out from the ocean' all kinds of things under the guidance of Vishnu.

VISHNU

Vishnu is nothing else than the old Vedic Sun-God, and all the later mythology about him is easily traceable to this source. His work is that of a preserver, a sustainer of the worlds. In popular belief, he manifests himself, in solid physical shapes, whenever the world is going wrong. He must be always near at hand to save it from destruction before due time. But in the Vedas there are no seeds even of this all-pervading doctrine of Avataras, of God made manifest. It is an invention of Puranic Hinduism. Even in these books there is a fair amount of vacillation observable about the nature of the Avataras, their numbers, their names, and the respective Gods whose manifestation they are. With regard to this last, it is due most likely not so much to mere vacillation, as to deliberate engrafting of sectarian views in the Puranas, by the mutually antagonistic worshippers of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Such a late work as the Mahabharata in its present state, has nothing to say on the question. We find no reference to them in Manu and the other Smritis. The doctrine seems to have begun to assume shape sometime after the fifth century after Christ. There is the larger list which comprises twenty-four such manifestations and a smaller list of only ten such. The founders of Jainism and Buddhism are both included in the bigger list, while the smaller list drops Rishabhadeva, the founder of Jainism. The story about Rishabhadeva is curious and throws a flood of light on some of our most cherished beliefs; It may therefore be told here.

Rishabhadeva is the great-grandson of Manu, and his eldest son was Bharata from whom this land of ours is known as Bharatavarsha. Some of the hundred sons of this founder of an anti-Vedic religion became learned Brahmanas, others holy Rishis and so on. This is taken from the eleventh Skanda of the Bhagavata and not from any heretical book; it ought to show to our orthodox sticklers for a primeval, heaven-born fourfold caste system and its vedic cult, that notwithstanding the elimination of much vedic and Puranic texts unsuitable to their purposes, much has still been left even in the Puranas to show the earlier state of religious and social affairs.

RAMA.

Modern Hinduism pins its faith to only two Avataras, Rama and Krishna. The former is stated to have taken place at the beginning of the Treta-Yuga, that is to say about twenty lakhs of years ago. Everything about him is on an equally large scale. He reigned for eleven thousand years. His father Dasharatha attained to an age of sixty thousand years and so on. His birth as that of his brothers, was also due to non-natural causes. It was by the partaking of a specially prepared and a sanctified food that their mothers conceived them. Rama's career does not seem to have been a very eventful one, in the sense of being full of adventures from beginning to end; or to have stamped itself in any new way on the world, in the sense of having given any surprising new turn to thought or practice. The chief stirring incident of his life seems to be the rescue of his wife from the clutches of Ravana, and his impress upon his own and subsequent ages in India is that of an exemplary life nobly lived, daily duties fulfilled excellently, human relationships as son, husband, brother, master, sovereign etc., illuminated by refined and delicate treatment, and, in short, the "eternal law of man illustrated in life as man." Rama is par excellence, the standard man in Hindu culture. His name for the last one thousand years and more has been used to rouse the most intense devotion to a spiritual life by some of the greatest Saints of India and a large vernacular literature has grown up around this cult, oscillating through every phase of philosophic thought in which Rama is the pure impersonal Brahma, to gorgeous temple worship, where he is the most personal God imaginable. One thing must be noted specially in connection with Rama-worship—at no time and nowhere has his cult ever degenerated into sensualism of a gross type. It has always upheld the banner of sexual purity amongst its devotees, and thus it has been a genuine force for good in the life of the country. It is quite another matter that a certain amount of homo-sexuality is to be found amongst the groups of Bairagis who are a Rama-worshipping sect. That is due only to the weakness of human nature which has always made it impossible all the world over for the average man or woman to lead a life of celibacy without falling into sexual aberrations of some kind or other, as is amply evidenced by the psychiatrical literature which describes the sexual life of western countries. Nor has this cult ever encouraged headlong, abject, complete self-surrender. It always has had a sturdy levelheadedness, a spirit of manliness and something of the martial virtues about it. There is an old tradition, which though apocryphal, conveys the true spirit of this "path," about a pilgrimage that Tulasi Das made to Brindaban to visit Sur Das and worship at the shrine of Krishna. When Tulasi Das went into the temple of Krishna, he saw the image not in the form familiar to him, that of a soldier youth with bow and quiver full of arrows, but in that of the youthful leader of the Rasa-dance with flute in his hands. The great devotee refused to pay obeisance and greeted the God in a matchless verse of light banter and gentle irony;

का बरनौं छबि आजकी भये बने हौ नाथ ।
तुलसी मस्तक तब नवै धनुषबानलेव हाथ ॥

"Very beauteously bedecked are you to-day, no doubt, my Lord, beyond my powers of description indeed. But the head of Tulasi will bow only when you change into the bow and arrows", And of course, the change took place.

Unfortunately the other cult, which commands a very much larger following, has not the same high ethical value. The very intenseness of its power of gripping its devotees has been taken advantage of by its vile latter-day custodians to spread corruption broad-cast. The Gita is not the text book of these.

THE KRISHNA CULT.

The Avatara of Krishna, in the Biblical phrase, did not bring peace but a sword in the world. The whole period covered by his life of 108 years (according to the Mahabharata, believable life period) was full of turmoil and the clash cf diplomacy and of arms. It was one long period of stress and storm. The vedic cult was pulverised. The power of the Kshatriya militarist was broken. The whole country was devastated by innumerable wars, the Mahabharata one being the culmination, so to say. Every chieftainship was broken and scattered. Even the kingdoms of Krishna and of Yudhisthira did not escape. The catastrophe was complete and overwhelming. Nothing survived of the olden days; and a new order had to be evolved from this bloody welter. The final bitter cup of misery and humiliation had to be drained to its very dregs, when even the womenfolk of these mighty heroes were looted by the wild Bhils and that peerless warrior Arjuna was unable to protect them.

According to the books, while the birth of Krishna was from Kshatriya parents his life from the day of his nativity up to maturity (in one place, the Bhagavata says, up to his eleventh year) was spent among the truculent, democratic, sturdy, pugnacious, self-respecting cowherds—the Gopas, the modern

Ahirs, then classed as Vaishyas, for Nanda is spoken of as such. Although all the accounts we have of him are from the orthodox and therefore tainted sources—we still have enough material preserved in them to see that he was not only a mighty warrior and a matchless diplomat, but that he was no less great as a social and religious reformer. The break caused by the Mahabharata war between the olden vedic culture and the later post-vedic culture (ushered in as the result of this devastating war) was as complete as that between the France of the pre and the post-revolution days. Such violent and complete breaks from the past are not such wholesale evils as most people, even historians, love to assert. When the dead hand of the past grips so strongly the new life that no progress is possible, then however violent the means, the new life must be liberated, if it is not to rot still-born.

The Jivatma—the spirit—has periodically to throw off its physical encasement when, from being an indispensable help it becomes as deadweight and an absolute bar to farther progress. So in the life of the nation also. When the old culture has got set, has lost its fluidity, its adaptability, then the life which it imprisons now, must be set free by the breaking of the encasing walls. Krishna did this. He fought against the formal old ritualism of the Vedas, successfully, as is shown by his eating up the sacrificial offering dedicated to the great vedic god Indra, and getting himself worshipped in his place. This was rather an unfortunate upheaval of vanity, and which inevitably will have made enmities more bitter. His teachings in the Gita, which though they show unmistakably the cloven hoof of the priest, still contain enough to show that it is opposed to the excessive ritualism of the veda's and the hereditary caste system.

Bhakti, devotion, faith, irrespective of class and caste, creed and ritualism, lead the jiva to salvation—this seems to be Krishna's devotional teaching. The old Naga worship which was very prevalent round about Mathura and Brindaban, as Archaeological excavations show, was also absorbed by him. It is these excavations that are helping to throw light on the statements of the Puranas, regarding his fair cousin Balarama being an incarnation of Sesha—the primeval serpent, and regarding the fights of Krishna with the serpants Vasuki, Kaliya and others. There is plenty of the Buddhistic and Jain flavour about his teachings and archaeological and epigraphical discoveries show that Mathura was a strong and early seat of these religions. It was the destruction of the place by the ruthless hordes of the fanatical and savage Musalman soldiery from the North-West, in the opening years of the 12th century, and many times afterwards, that drove out all memory of those earlier days from the minds of the Hindus. For six hundred years from that day the place knew no peace. The last quarter of the 17th century witnessed the destruction of the splendid temple built by Vira Simha Deva of Orchha at a cost of 33 lakhs of rupees. So complete was the destruction that even its very site is forgotten ; though most likely, it is the same on which the mosque, in the very heart of the city now stands. Hindus however, went on building anew, while Buddhism, having been absorbed into Hindusim, and not existing as a separate religion with well marked believers, naturally could not re-occupy and rebuild when once destroyed by the iconoclastic zeal of Islam's followers.

With regard to the extent of the 'god-head' embodied in Krishna the books differ seriously amongst themselves. The Bhagavata Purana says in one place "कृष्णस्तु भगवान्स्वयम् " that is, "Krishna is the Lord God Himself," while the Vishnu Purana says that he is an incarnation of one hair of Narayana. In another place, the Bhagavata also says that Balarama and Krishna are two "hairs" one white and one black, from the head of Narayana, सित कृष्णकेशौ । Let the believing one suit himself.

Before leaving this subject of the Krishna-cult a few words tracing the psychology of the path of devotion, and how it tends to produce religio-erotic delirium would not be amiss, and may perhaps help towards purging it of this foulness, by calling the attention of its votaries and of the general public to the danger and its genesis.

Bhakti is an asthenic, a debilitating emotion. Its standpoint is not "thy will be done and not mine," but much more thorough. All is thy will and thine alone; there is no such thing as 'my will' which has to be subordinated by an act of repression to the higher. It is the very climax and ecstacy of self-suppression. The discriminating intellect, the feeling of a separate personality leading to self-assertion, are all completely drowned in one wild wave of self-surrender. The result is inevitable. The body, no longer controlled by the human spirit but by the animal instincts, is suddenly deprived of its guiding star. Losing the straight path it wanders into the jungle of passions. This is not a condition of progression but of a most pitiable retrogression. If there had never been an intellect to control, there could not have been a fall, but when once this control has been firmly established then suddenly to withdraw it inevitably spells disaster. The great Swiss psychiatrist, Prof. Forel, has also some acute remarks on this subject of religio-erotomania in his book, " The sexual question." He says about persons suffering from this form of mania that they are themselves persuaded through the pathological influences of their own auto-suggestions; and are not therefore in the predicament of deliberate imposters whose beliefs and teachings are always clashing and thus producing inner discord making for ineffectiveness. Hence the great persuasive powers of these people, even over normal men, for are not the vast majority of men guided more by sentiment than reason? And these religio-erotics, with their piercing glance, their prophetic and dominating tone, their studied manners and appearences exert a powerful influence. Their self-assurance, the fire of their faith, their feeling of infallibility, all combine to fascinate, to hypnotise, average humanity. Wherever and whenever—whether in the East or the West, whether in Hinduism or Christianity—the path of devotion has been trodden with heedless and headlong steps unguided by the reins of intellect, such has ever been the case. How headlong unguided Bhakti makes for horrible degeneracy, one has only to remember the Shakhi-bhava worship of the Goswamis of Brindaban and in which the male devotees put on female attire and act as the beloved Gopis of Krishna, going even to the extent of mimicking the three days monthly segregation incumbent on every Hindu woman.

In its inception, the Bhakti-cult the devotion of the worshipper to the worshipped, was not objectionable. The trouble arose when the idea was poetised as *the love of the wife for the husband* and worse of a woman for a paramour परपुरुष which is deliberately said by the exponents of Bhakti to be the highest type of love. So long as the idea remained with the real devotees only, the cult retained its purity; but when once it descended to the common people, the original idea was lost in the more attractive idea of sexual love in its lower form. Illicit love, with its manifold and intense excitement, is no doubt the highest form of "passion" of the "feel of life;" hence it is easily mistaken by the impure mind for the highest type of love. The descent from the spiritual to the carnal is easy.

BUDDHA.

As Buddha is universally believed to be an Avatara it becomes necessary to say a few words about him and the work he did in re-purging Hnduism of its undesirable, effete elements. The orthodox Hindu, while he believes fully in Buddha being an Avatara, gives a reason for not worshipping him as such, which could only have suggested itself to an acute, but unscrupulous theological brain. Because the lower castes, the Rakshaṣas and others who had no right to vedic sacrifices, were beginning to take to them, and were thus enabled to occupy the seats specially reserved for the orthodox Hindu in Heaven, instead of going to Hell, their proper place, therefore God, taking compassion on his elect, came down to devise some method which would effectually prevent these low-born people from getting into the seats of the favoured. He did so by denouncing the Vedic ritual and all that it stood for, and thus turned the attention of these aspirants for heavenly joys into the ignoble channels of sacrificelessness, castelessness and freedom from ritual restraints of every kind. Modern India is steadily learning to suppress this blasphemous argument, but with its suppression, the theory of Buddha being an incarnation of God tends also to be quietly thrust into the background. We need not trouble ourselves further with all this 'old maid's babble', but go on to deal with the work he accomplished for India, and its genesis. It is clear that Buddhism though practically non-existent in India itself is in reality one of the numerous subsects of Hinduism; and theological prejudice should not blind us to this fact of far-reaching importance in the future life of Hinduism. this disinherited child must receive back its heritage, and the dishonest trustees must be compelled to make full amends for their past conduct.

When the Mahabharata war smashed up the Kshatriya power, it also paralysed their restraining hand on Brahminic pretensions. The Brahmanas found that, while it was no more possible to revive the vedic cult, it was quite feasible to re-establish their waning power, in fact to make their supremacy as a hieratic caste secure once for all. The caste system became rigid, learning became the monopoly of the hereditary caste of priests. The Brahmana, the custodian of learning by diligent teaching and preaching, divided and sub-divided the various ethnic groups with whom he had dealings, into endless closed castes all looking up to him. Buddhism was a protest against the harmful influences of this degenerate sacerdotalism. For the non-Brahmanas had slowly been gathering force and were becoming self-conscious and self-reliant, and indisposed to put up any further with the overweening spiritual pride, extreme exclusiveness, and all round domination of the Brahmana. They had through intimate contact in the course of ages, seen through him and the hollowness of his pretensions. The gathering forces of a reformation found their spokesman in Buddha, as they had earlier found in Rishabhadeva, the first founder of Jainism. Buddha again denounced the 'flowery words' of the vedas which misled people from the path of righteousness, as his great predecessor Krishna had done, and preached the law of universal love and harmlessness, A-himsa. It is on this special point that stress has been laid by that great lyrical poet of Sanskrit, Jayadeva, in his Gita Govinda. He sings of the all-embracing mercy of the great teacher:

निन्दसि यज्ञविधेरहह श्रुतिजातम्
सदय हृदय दर्शितपशुघातम् ।
केशव धृतबुद्धशरीर, जयजगदीश हरे !

"Lord of the world, Hari! and Keshava hail!
That, as the Buddha, the Enlightened, dost
All gently blame the scripture-texts that praise
The virtues of the blood-stained sacrifice.
And with the heart of pitying tenderness
Dost prove the sin of slaying sinless lives."

It was this all-embracing humanitarianism which was at the bottom of every one of his social and religious reforms.

Some patriotic thinkers of India while regarding Buddha with the greatest possible reverence, personally believe that he has done much harm to India. They feel that by his doctrine of extreme harmlessness he destroyed not only the aggressive warlike instinct but also the self-defending spirit and power of the people. All this illustrates, over again, the fact that error and danger lie in extremism. The Krishna-cult of devotion, by excess degenerated into sexual perversities and debaucheries. The Buddha-cult of harmlessness by excess degenerated into weakness and loss of the power of self-preservation. Hinduism was never an extremely 'vegetarian and non-killing religion.' It had a place in its polity for the martial function also. Buddha's stamp on India is so great that though by profession we are not Buddhists, in reality we are the greatest Buddhists on earth, for though very far from being purely vegetarian, yet India is much more so than other countries professedly Buddhist.

Buddha preached the abolition of monopoly' in every sphere of human activity. When once the jealously guarded fortress of spiritual enlightenment was thrown wide open for every one to enter—irrespective of his caste or class; the privileged class who had dwelt securely and in comfort behind its solid walls, found itself crowded out and in imminent peril. It did not lose its head however, but set about devising means for neutralising the evil, and it did neutralise it effectually by yielding in all non-essentials—the surest and most successful device of diplomacy—while holding on to the one thing that really mattered, namely self-preservation, the preservation of all the dignity and emoluments of its own caste. It opened its rank just enough to admit some few of the rebels to an equal status, but not in such numbers as to disorganise the old polity. Buddha himself does not seem to have denounced 'Brahminity; he only denounced bad Brahmanas, who, though of

Brahmana parentage, had no right to receive the homage paid to a true Brahmana. It was only later, when Hinduism had again reasserted itself and Buddhism had begun to harden into a creed, that the hereditary caste system came to be denounced, and efforts made to lower the status of the higher castes instead of raising to the highest level that of the lower castes. This was a tactical blunder. It aroused widespread resistance and led to the final disappearance of Buddhism from the soil of its birth, as a social power. Its philosophic teachings and its law of compassion were absorbed by the Brahmanas and the people alike. Shankaracharya is dubbed a *prachchhanna Bauddha*—" a masked Buddhist ", but all the same his philosophy commands the largest following in India ; and the vedic sacrifices have fallen wholly into disuse. The present day slaughter of goats and buffaloes before Durga and Kali, very extensively practised in Bengal and to a lesser extent all over the country are due mostly to the absorption of the aboriginal cults of India into Hinduism.

I say nothing about Jainism though its founder Rishabhadeva is also one of the recognised Avataras. There are now only about thirteen lakhs of Jainas and all within the confines of India. Jainism like Buddhism has contributed a vast amount of splendid literature in Sanskrit and in Prakrit covering the whole field of philosophy, poetry, prose, rhetoric, lexicography, grammar. Its Saptabhangi Nyaya is a masterpiece of dialectical skill. Its temples are the finest that India has.

KALKI

There is another Avatara yet to come, namely Kalki. He will, it is said, avoid the mistakes of his predecessors and profiting by the time-spirit, he will 'restore' the original single caste system, for by the time of his advent, the whole people will have become bastards, according to the teaching of the Puranas, through the breaking down of the prohibitions about marriages. This caste which, according to Shridhara the commentator of the Bhagavata, was in the beginning styled Hamsa, will now be known as Brahmana. This raising of every one to the social status of a Brahmana, will naturally win support from all the lower castes, and even the Brahmanas will not be so fierce against such an innovation as they would be if *they* were to be *lowered* in dignity. It is human nature. If you call a Raja, a Babu, he gets annoyed; but if you call a Babu a Raja, he is pleased; and the Raja's annoyance at there being another Raja is not so very great. The sting of social difference and degradation will thus be withdrawn and unhampered natural ability allowed a fair field and no favour. Then social standing will be the result of social causes, intellectual standing of intellect, and religious standing of *real spiritual development.*

It is time that the Kalki came, for the caste confusion which has been going on for ages now, is, one would think, fairly complete by now. So long back as the Mahabharata times (5000 years ago,) according to traditional belief, Yudhisthira, when questioned by Nahusha, declared in clear unequivocal words that caste was a question of character and character alone; it was vocational, it was functional, and had nothing to do with birth.

One thing notable about this Avatara to come, is, that though his work will be far more strenuous and he will come riding a white horse with a flaming sword in hand—fit equipment for a Kshatriya—he will be a Brahmana. It is in the fitness of things that he should be a Brahmana. Just as real growth is always from *within* and is not something superimposed from without, so real disruption also is from *inside*, other causes being mere accessories. The disintegrating process arises within the organism itself as much as the integrating. The real redemption of the Brahmana, and with him of all other Hindus can come only through a true Brahmana; and so Kalki will be a Brahmana. It is the well-known Homeopathic principle of *Similia similibus curantor*. Ravana could be destroyed by Rama only when Vibhishana his own brother defected to Rama's side. Kamsa could only be destroyed by his nephew Krishna.

THE THEORY OF AVATARAS.

As the faith in the doctrine of Avataras is widely and firmly fixed in the Hindu heart, the question "What is an Avatara" and, incidentally along with it "What is a Rishi," might be briefly dealt with from the old as well as the new points of view. The word Avatara literally means 'one who has descended. Popularly it is used to designate certain non-human and human beings in whom Vishnu embodied himself, and is used for ten such manifestations especially. There are also larger lists of twenty-four and of forty-eight which include these ten. The word Rishi is used for the 'seers' of the vedic mantras, as also for those Brahmanas of the Puranic books who had undergone especial austerities. Apart from these technical meanings, both words have come to have a loose general meaning and to be used as honorific epithets for men of various grades of social, spiritual and intellectual eminence; but the condition is that such eminence must be combined with moral excellence. It is risky to attempt precise definitions of the terms, as so used but an attempt may be made. An Avatara is a person in whom the normal and the super-normal streams of consciousness have become inseparable and indistinguishable, and in whom consequently there are neither moral conflicts nor intellectual efforts to discover the right actions. The will is so fully generalised that all his three 'bodies' or five 'sheaths' work in perfect unison and harmony, and he presents to the world the spectacle of the finest efflorescence of human growth. In other words, and in the nomenclature of the philosophic systems, he would be a jivan-mukta—a man who had gained the only true liberation namely salvation while *in the body.*

The Saint or Rishi is the next lower stage of development. A person in whom these two streams of consciousnesses though developed, have not yet been harmonised and in whom intellectual efforts are yet necessary for the discovery of right actions, but moral conflicts have ceased and equillibrium has been gained, is a Rishi.

The ordinary crude materialistic ideas, of *the whole* of God imprisoning himself in single human and even non-human bodies, as in Hinduism and many other polytheistic religions or of Logos becoming flesh, as in some Christian sects are all difficult of belief even to a theist.

To the modern man, with his wider outlook and his scientific training, such beliefs may well be unthinkable and would savour of blasphemy. The belief of ones-self being the " elect of the Lord God " can belong only to that primitive stage of mental development, when the child regards itself complacently as the hub of the universe, round which everything revolves. The Sun, the Moon, the Stars, the Earth all were made for its use and enjoyment and for that alone. For a twentieth century 'educated' man it is not easy to believe that he belongs to a 'chosen' race (though the vanity of human nature reappears in the modified form of "racial superiority") and the belief that the whole of God manifested Himself " fully " for the benefit of one special race, deserting the rest of the Universe for the time being and allowing Himself to be " cribbed, cabined, and confined" in a puny, mortal human body for the sake of his "Chosen ones," is unthinkable. He cannot but regard such a dogma as degrading to the conception of the Godhead and hence blasphemous. For a wonder, among the three living religions, which pin their faith to a revelation, the latest *i. e.*, Islam has (at least in the teachings of Muhammad) steered clear of this unphilosophic and unscientific dogma, and has confined itself to a faith in prophets; but lest the laws of human psychology be falsified and human nature appear more perfect than it is, the believers in Muhammad have decided conclusively that he is the very last prophet, that there never can be another, that the stores of God were exhausted when Muhammad was sent down. We have to learn to recognise that the Avataras are God incarnate only in the philosophic, vedantic sense that they are supereminent embodiments of the Universal life and that indeed everything is in Him and from Him. These special embodiments are great teachers, are leaders, messengers, yes, but not—Bhagavan-swayam—God Himself.

SHIVA.

We may now pass on to Shiva who is the third member of the Puranic Trinity. His vedic counterparts are the eleven Rudras, with whom later mythology has tried to indentify him. All his multifarious names, Shiva, Mahadeva, and so on are only of a later date. He is always worshipped as a Phallus set up in a womb. This worship is nothing peculiar to India; other countries and other times have witnessed such worship. The Egyptians, for instance, used to worship the Phallus of Osiris. In the Vedic Samhitas, there is a scornful reference to the non-vedic phallus-worshipping peoples—the Shishnadevah (Rig. VII, 21,50, X, 99,3) Hargrave Jennings' 'Phallacism' contains much information from the mystic's stand-point, while recent works of Archæological and Ethnological research contain scattered among them, a good deal of information on the subject from the rationalist's standpoint. The Puranic stories about this worship, as given in the Shiva Purana, the Linga Purana, the Shiva Rahasya, are very crude and silly, when not quite gross. They unmistakably show their savage non-vedic origin. It would seem that the vedic cult was not powerful enough wholly to displace the aboriginal Phallus-cult; and insensibly the Vedic Rudra-cult got permeated with this wide-spread popular nature worship. Gradually this symbol of 'Tribe-supply' has undergone a most remarkable emotional change. It has become the object of worship of ascetics, and Vedantins of the school of Shankaracharya. The history of such a tremendous transformation, in the concepts attached to a symbol, would be immensely instructive to the student of Religions.

CURRENT WORSHIPS

This worship, and in fact the conception of the Trimurti—Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and their consorts—as the supreme deities was evolved quite late in the day. To say nothing of the Vedas, we do not find it even in the Ramayana and the Mahabbharata. In the latter work the word Trimurti occurs only *once*, in a verse where the three are said to be only different forms or functions of Prajapati. In the Vedas, Prajapati is quite a minor God and is the replica of Brahma and Vishnu. The prominent Gods, who dominated the religious thought of the Vedic sacrificers were Varuna, Indra, Agni, all dead and forgotten now. I may remind the reader here again of what I have already said above, (because it is important to remember in connection with our fluid mythology) that all these Gods are the shadowy projections of the tribal consciousness, and are the offspring of the curious rituals ; and that while the original meanings of the rituals were gradually forgotten and ultimately lost, these shadow-beings gradually became lucid and concrete ; and once their origin was forgotten, a new ritual began to rise around them.

In modern India, the Brahma-worship is stone dead, having merged, it seems, into the worship of Shiva, whose generative aspect made it easy for such absorption into Phallus-worship. The Puranic versions of the cause of the abolition of Brahma-worship are many. The principal one is that he was seen by Shiva attempting to commit incest with his own daughter Saraswati. What exactly the significance of this evidently artificial myth is, is difficult to say. Only two temples remain to him now, the more important one being at Pushkara near Ajmer. But it was not so about 900 years ago, when Alberuni came to India, in the wake of Mahmud of Ghazni's invasions. Then Brahma-worship was flourishing, while Vishnu-worship had begun to rise into favour about that time. This is rather unaccountable as the Bhagavata worship dates from some centuries B. C. Shiva worship was practically non-existent then. His worship developed among the Southern Dravidians. The Dravidians, though now confined mostly to Southern India, in the earlier days of Indian History, were spread all over the country and have been pushing on from the North-West, through Baluchistan; the large Brahui tribe being Dravidian. Because the Dravidian is now the occupant of the peninsula only, it is often forgotten that his has been a most pervasive influence on Hindu culture. To come back to Shiva-worship, it has within the last 500 years slowly spread itself northwards, though it does not command the same influence as Vishnu-worship. Its influence and vogue, even such as they are, are due chiefly to the fact that it has captured Benares, from whence spreads all over upper India the religious and ritualistic lore imbibed by generation after generation of young Brahmin students, who come to study in this ancient seat of Sanskrit learning, after the destruction of the "University" of Shrinagar in Kashmir. The memory of those days when students used to go to Kashmir is still preserved in a queer little custom. After his sacred thread ceremony the young student enacts the farce of going off to study holy lore, and the place he is supposed to go to is Kashmir.

Another argument, this time a lithic and so quite a solid one, about the Trinity being a comparatively late production is the evidence of the rock-cut temples and of the temples in Greater India, namely Cambodia, Java and other distant places. There the figures met with are not those of Vishnu and Shiva, but of Indra and other Vedic Gods. All these facts might well be pondered over and taken to heart by those of our people who are ever harping about our religion being to-day also the same vedic Sanatana Dharma "the eternal" unchanging religion. They commit a great mistake and do grievous injustice and harm to themselves and to India who repudiate furiously the teaching of History and closely shut their eyes to this continuous change. It would be much better to yield gracefully to sweet reasonableness, and with open eyes try to steer a course which experience and knowledge show to be beneficial for the life of the people, in the religious as well as the other departments of the communal life, instead of hindering the progress of all by blindly clinging to the dead bones of orthodoxy.

For sometime now our allegiance has been given to both these Gods—the conservator Vishnu and the regenerator Shiva, and the sectarian differences minimised as much as possible. Our popular philosophy too shows this blend. It is a dualism, placing Vishnu or Shiva indiscriminately at its head. These two Gods, symbolise and typify the two primal needs of human life, namely, that of food supply and tribe supply; the two root-feelings which have found vigorous and naked expression in the well-known Sanskrit phrase—Shishnodara parayanata—the two forces of stomach-hunger and sex-hunger, that keep the Jiva rushing madly on the path of evolution but which also act as restraining, guiding impulses, to prevent the soul going off the track. Few of us realise that a belief in progressive evolution is directly contradicted by the belief held in another separate 'idea-tight' compartment of the Hindu heart, namely that of the theory of a progressive deterioration of the human race, through the cycle of the Yugas, from the Satya to the Kali. Both cannot be right. It is because of this basic confusion of thought that he also holds the belief that souls perform jumps to and fro between all the kingdoms from the human to the mineral, and his philosophic doctrine of Animism has remained so crude. Both these questions namely that of Yugas and of Animism will be discussed farther on.

IMAGES.

In the meantime, a digression on the beauty or otherwise of the images of the Gods might be put in here before dealing with other topics, as the question has a direct bearing on the want of artistic, aesthetic development and its root cause, pessimism in religion.

The question why a nation of idol-worshippers like the Hindus, have, for full 2000 years, failed to evolve to perfection the arts of the sculptor and of the painter unlike for instance, the Greeks and the Italians at their best, is a puzzle which has not yet been satisfactorily solved. That its causes lie deep in the religious consciousness of the people is practically certain. So far as I am aware no attempt has ever been made to face the problem squarely. The fact that the vast majority of the images of the various Gods and Goddesses are exceedingly crude, when not monstrous, and that there are none which are not commonplace and thoroughly conventional, is religiously left unexplored. The dread cry of "atheism and sacrilege" is potent enough to make all Hindus hold their tongues—unless they be members of the Arya Samaj, who blindly attack all idolatory, while themselves given up madly to 'vedolatry', and have not yet developed the historical instinct, which would investigate the problem in a serious spirit. We see that even the mages of Krishna—the God beauteous, over whose description floods of rhetoric are poured out that are almost hysteric in their intensity are no better than other images. The idol worshipped at Natha-dwara in the state of Udaipur, the headquarters of the Vallabhacharya sect as Krishna is bearded, has dogs and parrots carved on the supporting stone, is anything but beautiful. If one might hazard a guess, it is an image of Bhairava, the dreaded Kotwal of the Gods and one of the demons of Mahadeva. Vallabha found the image handy and dressed it up to represent Krishna. He was in this but following the time-honoured practice of every religion. In Chicacole there is a temple which is known as Shri Kurmakshetra in which a large stone tortoise is worshipped now as Vishnu; formerly it was worshipped as Mahadeva. In the famous place of pilgrimage on the Tirupati Hills, known as Balaji, similar transformations of the idol have taken place through the reforming zeal of Shankaracharya and then of Ramanuja. It is a standing image over seven feet in height with a face so elongated as to be quite a snout, and most likely it is a converted image of a boar. The image of Narasinha in the temple on the top of the hill Sinhachalam near Vizagapatam has also a pig's snout, and not a lion's face. As far as we can gather the old Hindu never became capable of working on canvas or in stone. He too, like the Musalman, despised painting and statuary and originally was not an idol-worshipper. Perhaps in this case also it came to be a question of expediency. Coming into a new country and finding all sorts of idols human, semi-human and animal, being worshipped, they gave them a meaning and a place in their own pantheon, and after thus sugaring it they swallowed the bitter pill.

ARYAN MIGRATION INTO INDIA

It is not always remembered that this migration did not take place in one terrific rush sweeping away all barriers before its irresistible might; but that it took place in driblets, possibly not unlike the Parsi emigration, which took place under the stress of persecution at home, in the course of which only a very small number could escape and carry away fragments only of their scriptures with them. The handful of Aryans that wandered away from their original home, for refuge from some overwhelming catastrophe, were thus under the dire necessity of accepting externally at least the gods of the people among whom they came to dwell. Here in the course of time, they began to piece together, from the remnants of their imperfectly preserved and fragmentary literature, and a more or less hazy memory of the traditions and meaning of this literature, a faith which they fondly imagined was the same which their ancestors had held ages before in their early happy home; but which, as a matter of fact, was deeply coloured by their new surroundings and was very different from the original faith and civilisation. That this guess is not altogether improbable is borne out by the subsequent history of India. Buddhist shrines have been bodily annexed by the Hindus and the image of Buddha made to do duty for that of Vishnu. A similar fate has overtaken many Hindu shrines when they have been filched away from the custody of one sect into that of another. The idol has been given a new name and another ritual substituted and the transformation is complete! It is nobody's interest to record these things, and in a few generations the memory even of such a gross imposition fades and disappears. The Christians and the Musalmans have behaved exactly in the same way. They could not destroy the earlier ways completely, so they covered it with a veneer of their own new faith. The Kaba (the cubical room) has a black stone Phallus (now embedded into one of the walls) and Rome preserves in St. Peter's chair, a seat of the Pagan pontiffs.

THE PAUCITY OF HINDU ART.

Coming back to our point, these Gods are probably relics of the Stone Age, and having become an integral part of a higher civilization, gained a longer lease of life thereby. Their very ugliness has helped them to this immortality, working as they did on the terror of their devotees. We see to-day how the hideousness of the image of Kali and her bloody surroundings have so stamped their terror on the plastic nerves of the Bengali youth that however clever, educated and unbelieving he may grow to be, he cannot get over his reverence for and faith in the gruesome Goddess. That Kali in her various shapes is a non-aryan goddess, is amply testified to, by even Sanskrit literature. The Shudra-Kamalakara, a standard work of the 15th Century A. C., speaking of the image of Durga at Vindhyachala, near Mirzapur, says, she is the Goddess of the Kiratas and other aboriginal tribes and is worshipped by Mlechchhas, thugs and others of their dread and infamous kind. The Gaudavaho (A. C. 700 to A. C. 725) S. P. Pandit's edition describes how King Yashovarman on his march from Kanouj to Gauda was guided by a Shabar, having only a turmeric leaf for a garment, to the temple of the dread goddess. Verses 285 to 338 hymn the goddess and incidently describe the sight that meets one within the temple—it is hideous to the last degree; fit surroundings for an orgy of cannibals. A few quotations ought to suffice: "If O Kali thou didst not cause the destruction of life how would the whole person of thy endless form be covered with strings of skulls?" (297) "Thy lamps...........seem to burn dimly on account of the darkness caused by the hair of the numerous heads offered to thee." (318). "The Kol women anxious to get a sight of the human victim as he is being slaughtered so crowd together as to mount upon one another........." (319). But such is the power of blind imitation that it has come to be worshipped by every Hindu. So too does the ugly shapeless wooden idol of Jagannath inspire votaries all over India. In Benares there is a temple of Varahi-devi. The image is a standing one almost six feet, with the face of a sow. It would be interesting to know if the body is a woman's or of a sow with a row of breasts. If the latter, a very instructive comparison might be made with a somewhat similar Greek Goddess. No amount of experience of life or rationalistic education seems to be powerful enough to withstand the force of these early ingrained associations of fear.

One school of Anthropological investigators holds that the beginning of worship is in the emotion of fear and not in that of love; and that it is only at a late stage of growth that increasing civilisation succeeds in replacing in the race the early element of fear by that of love. Ganesh the chief of the demon army of Mahadeva must be worshipped and propitiated at the beginning of every enterprise if trouble is to be avoided. In the Mahabharata, in the course of a controversy between rival Councillors of Yudhishthira, we have the argument, " Rudra the destroyer is worshipped, and not Brahma the paternal." Sayana in his commentaries on the Vedas, says, that Tamas manifests first then Rajas, then Sattwa. All this fits in with the view of the Anthropologists. But we may also bear in mind that if Sattwa and the love-element manifest later, the seed of them is yet present from the very beginning. Amongst all the idolatrous nations it was the Greeks only who succeeded in endowing with surpassing beauty the images of their Gods.

It is not given to every race or nation to evolve everything to perfection. We need not be so vain as to hug the sweet belief to our hearts, that we alone are the 'elect' people that to us alone were the Gods bountiful, and that everything we attempted we carried to perfection. This spurious nationalism, which is only another aspect of the vanity that has generated the 'highest caste' of the caste system, has to be put aside in face of hard uncontrovertible facts. If genuine art is to grow up in the country, this attitude must go. It was given us to be pre-eminent in the field of words and not of concrete matter. For 3000 years our grammatical system has been unrivalled, our philosophy is still unapproached, our Sanskrit Poetry of a very high grade; but when it came to stone and bronze and ivory; to the wall-surface and the canvas, we failed lamentably. How could a race that banished joyousness from life, that honoured asceticism and pessimism as higher than anything else, that despised and dreaded the power of the senses; that held up renunciation as the only ideal of life, with Nirvana as its goal—how could such a race develop Art, whose very heart is concrete material beauty and its sensuous appreciation? Did we ever set up shrines to living beauty? Did we ever ordain that worship should be offered to the beautiful? Did we ever inaugurate contests of beauty? Instead of prizing beauty, the Hindu dreaded it like the snake in the grass, and regarded it as something to be fled from. Shrines have been raised to shrivelled and ugly ascetics and philosophers but never to possessors of male or female beauty. The athlete, the victor in games, were not honoured by statues. The nude in art was taboo, all our Gods and Goddesses must be draped—so what necessity to mould the limbs in lines of beauty if they are to be kept hidden behind draperies? When the Hindu turned to the concrete he at once came down to the elemental Phallus & Yoni, or uncouth Jagannath and Kalis and Ganeshas. Neither the painter nor the sculptor knew any anatomy, or worked from living models. The artist is a man of low education and of low caste, no high caste man is to take up the profession—such at least is the theory of the thing: see for evidence the Bhashya of Madhavacharya on the Parasara Smriti. Our modellers and sculptors to-day are the low and untouchable caste of Konhars (Kumbhakaras) our painters again the low Rangsaz; our musicians, the Shahnaiwalas are Pariahs.

The Hindus have done something in Music and Architecture; but even of these two, what we have to-day, shows distinctly Musalman influence, so also painting. The Buddhist of course did greatly in Architecture, and that they did plenty of pioneer work in painting may be seen from the Ajanta cave frescoes. The emancipation of the Musalman from the barbarous command of his religion, against the delineation of the human form, was long in coming; he learned to paint portraits, but he never got over the prohibition against statuary. So far from getting over it, and helping to evolve the scupltor's art, he helped in the destruction of what little there was. For a realisation of what is really good painting or statuary, we have to go Europe and to the best periods of Greece and Italy. Music again, if we compare its modern post-Musalman developments, with the Sama Veda period, will be seen to have been very crude. So also dancing: we have only to compare the exceedingly complex and almost arcane motions of the present day with the simple 'whirlings' of the Rasa of Shri Krishna, and the few and simple musical instruments. All these three seem to have developed only within the last 600 years or so. The enormous mass of Sanskrit literature does not preserve the name of a single human artist, though there are plenty of references to Apsaras and Gandharvas whose modern counterparts, the poor dancing girl and her company of musicians are; the *bete noire* of the modern Hindu Reformer Philistine. The deepseated contempt and philosophic aversion of orthodoxy for a life of the senses is responsible for the poverty of our art. Not till this deadening attitude is changed can the atrophied artistic perceptions begin to be vitalised, and give us something worth taking genuine pride in.

It may be pointed out that there are absolutely no traces available of any Hindu plastic art—architecture, painting or statuary—which are Pre-Buddhistic. It has perished utterly, not a single specimen is available to-day. And it should be no matter of surprise, because the Vedic Hindu worked in wood and mud, bones and grass; he did not know the art of baking bricks or working in stone. The Mahabharata tradition is that it was a foreigner Mayasura, who was captured by Arjuna, that built a palace for Yudhisthira. Most likely he was a Babylonian, who had wandered off into India. The tradition of wooden architecture still persists, as buildings in Burma and Siam testify, all resplendent with gold leaf. In painting, perspective—the art of so arranging light and shade as to produce a feeling of actuality was unknown. Hindu painting has always been an unilinear outline of the shadow as it fell on a wall or on the ground. Even to-day the much-be-praised paintings of the new Bengali school are sadly wanting in technique, whatever Mr. E. B. Havell and Dr.

A. K. Coomarswamy may say to the contrary. The Japanese and the European have much to teach us yet on the subject.

Beauty which has to be *read* into an image, or a picture, which the imagination of the on-looker has to supply from his own inner consciousness, may well be *ideal*, but can scarcely be called beauty. If the aim of the artist is only to produce a general symbolical effect, and not punctilious treatment of the exact shape and perfect finish of each particular part, he has, to my mind, encroached on the function of the ethical teacher and so far abdicated his function as an artist. Both painting and sculpture have to be assiduously worked directly from nature's models of the beautiful as in the West, and while they are not to be crudely realistic in their reproduction of the actual they are neither to be *symbolised* out of all recognition into some monstrosity. The idealisation should be to this extent that it may be a sort of 'composite' of all possible excellences, and so serve as a standard for living men and women to endeavour to try to approach.

The destructive influences of tropical climate, Islamic iconoclasm, general anarchy, accidental fires and finally the ruthless Portuguese and the severely 'practical' (*i.e.*, the pagoda-tree-shaking) Englishman in the earlier days of his occupation of the country, have all combined to destroy nearly the whole of ancient art. Music and Architecture developed under the patronage of the Hinduised Moghals and painting also progressed though only a little; but the art of the sculptor made no advance at all, especially where the human form was concerned. The defence put forward now-a-days, that Indian statuary and painting are not to be judged by the standard of the European, because the latter judges from the standpoint of a severe naturalism while the former takes its stand on symbolism, is scarcely convincing. Let there be symbolism by all means, but why need it be grotesque, ugly, as it is in too many cases? The European naturalism does not usually admire the reproduction of the ugly, though it must be admitted, some realistic schools have gone too far. The conventional has so dominated the Hindu, that it has left no room for the natural where man is concerned. Animals are reproduced in art fairly accurately. It is true that with regard to one point the European has departed very widely from the best Greek tradition which required the production of colour effects in the statues. The Hindu inlaid his work with jewels and ivories and precious metals, besides coloring to nature, and thus tried to produce a living effect. No amount of special pleading for the suppression of the muscular system and for the grotesqueness produced by extra-limbs etc., in the case of the Gods and Goddesses can reconcile one to this conventional and symbolical method. It is also a vicious tradition which makes the artist indulge in the most grotesque exaggerations of various features of the human figure —the largeness of the bust and hips, the thinness of the waist etc.

Section 2.

THE THEORY OF YUGAS

In the Vedic Samhitas there is no mention made of the Yugas, nor is there any theory worked out in the various Brahmanas. The words, Kali, Dvapara, Treta and Krita not—Satya—occur; but it is very doubtful if they are anything more than a mere reference to the various ways in which the *aksha* (dice) fell in gambling. Nor do Mahabharata, Manu and Ramayana, barring the much later Uttara Kanda, seem to have any such precise and uncontrovertible references to Yugas, such as appear in the Puranas, with their tremendous durations of time. It is only when we come to these works, that we see, in all its tropical luxuriance, the theory of the Yugas and its preposterous periods of time. I will quote here verse from the Vana-parva :

यदाचन्द्रश्च सूर्यश्च तयातिष्यबृहस्पती ।
एकराशौ समेष्यन्ति प्रवर्त्स्यति तदा कृतम् ॥

This is a polite way of denying the theory of cycles; and idiomatic and forcible method of saying that as there never could be a conjunction of Moon Sun, Tishya and Jupiter so there never could be a Krita Yuga; in short it was like the Greek Kalends, a point of time which never became actual. The thing, as worked out in the Puranas, seems to be due to astronomers, who tried to calculate the beginning of creation, and as man always loves to dwell on the superiority of the past the calculations struck his fancy and so got worked up with his social life.

It is an instructive lesson to the Psychologist and a sad commentary on the sort of teaching the modern Hindu is getting in the schools and colleges of the country, that both, the doctrine of evolution from lower to higher, and its exact opposite the doctrine of the Yugas, of evolution from perfection to lower and ever lower, find hospitable roof within his head and heart, and he fails to realise their mutually destructive nature and the utter absurdity of believing in both. The Puranas assert that in the Satya, Dharma who is symbolised as a bull roams about on all his four legs. In other words, the life of those days is utterly perfect and there is no stint of holiness. It is an age of absolute sinlessness and of utmost happiness. The presiding deity of the age is Brahma, and the predominating guna is Sattwa. The duration of the age is 1,728,000 years.

The Treta is the next age, whose presiding deity is Surya, the predominating guna is Rajas. The mighty Dharma-bull has only three legs on which he can only limp along now, obviously meaning that righteousness is diminished by one-fourth, and that sin and unhappiness have entered the world. The duration of the age is 1,296,000 years.

The Dvapara is the third age. Vishnu is its presiding deity, and there should have been one predominating guna. But here arose a serious difficulty facing the complacent theorist, and threatening to pull down his cloud castles—but he was not to be defeated: he rose to the occasion. He refused to be shaken by such paltry considerations as that of having to apportion three gunas among four Yugas. He coolly lays it down that the Rajas of the Dvapara is not the pure Rajas of the Treta, but is tinged with Tamas. The Dharma-bull is reduced to the horrible fate of having only two legs left to hobble on as best he can. The duration of the age is 864,000.

Finally comes the Kali—the age in which we are supposed to be and of which 5000 years are believed to have gone. To the orthodox it acts as a splendid crutch. Whenever anything goes wrong he calmly folds his hands and ejaculates: " Brother are we not in Kali, how can you expect anything better?" It is a specific far more potent than opium to lull the brother at least (if not himself also) to sleep and forgetfulness, supineness and invertebracy, while the rest of the world is ceaselessly pushing forward even though, it may be, to Anglo-German war. In this age sin and unhappiness have full sway, and the poor Dharma-bull has only one foot left. As the age is such a rotten one, a merciful Providence has reduced its duration very considerately and it will last only for 432,000 years.

Various pseudo-scientific efforts are being made these days to rationalise these teachings and bring them into line with science; but I am afraid a fate similar to that of Christian apologists of the absurd science in the Bible is awaiting them, and they too will go to the wall. In the Vana parva of Mahabharata the whole theory is reduced to utter absurdity and it is pathetic to see orthodoxy still clinging desparately to it. It is said there that the qualities of the Yugas do not depend on some particular time, but are the reflex of the character of the person who is the king at the time. It is *his* qualities that are imposed on the country he rules, *irrespective of time*: यथाराजा तथा प्रजा as the popular proverb has it. Now if this means anything then the orderly retrogression could from superlatively good to bad and worse and superlatively worse, as worked out in great detail in the Puranas must be all absurd. There is no such precise order. Instead, there is the proverbial erratic 'frog-jump' and it must always be a toss-up in which Yuga, the next few years may land a country and its inhabitants from the Yuga in which they happen to be in now, for it all depends upon the incalculable element of the personality of the king of the time. In fact this brackets the theory of Cycles with the theory of the transmigration of souls—where too there is neither rhyme nor reason. You may be a man in this life and in the next a stone, a plant or an animal. It is owing to the universally spread and firmly held belief in these two doctrines that the people of the country are so full of 'divine content' not, '*dis*content'—are so governable and tractable in the administrator's hands, the like of which docility exists nowhere else in the world. This docility, by making the administrators' work very easy puts an enormous moral responsibility on him, but few are capable of rising to the height of it in a world full of egotistic and heartless competition where everything is for the narrow smaller self and the bigger Self is wholly forgotten; and the result is temptation instead of sense of responsibility and exploitation instead of protection. 'Let us keep them weak and exploit them' says the administrator. 'Let us keep them ignorant and exploit them' say both the administrator and the priest.

I need scarce point out that the strongly held belief amounting to faith in a progressive steady deterioration and sinfulness from a state of utter perfection and purity, can at best be characterised as a pious fraud. Tennyson has put his finger right on the spot:

" Hesper Venus were we native to that splendour, or in Mars,
We should see the Globe we groan in, fairest of the evening stars."

Tennyson : " Locksley Hall, Sixty Years After."

In short it is the old proverb over again दूरके ढोल सुहावने whose English equivalent is " distance lends enchantment to the view."

To complete the Puranic account of these preposterous calculations, these four Yugas together constitute a Mahayuga. Seventy-one Mahayugas make the Manvantara, the name being due to the fact that at the close of each such period a new Manu appears to guide the destiny of the world. Fourteen such manvantaras go to make a Kalpa. The Kalpa is a "day" of Brahma; it is the period of time during which he is awake, and carries on the creation. Its duration is 1000 Mahayugas. At the close of a Kalpa, when he goes to sleep, the whole Universe becomes engulfed in a grand deluge, to appear again at the next awakening of Brahma, after his sleep, lasting through the whole of his "night", which is equal in duration to His "day." The period of time between two Mahapralayas is called a "day of Brahma", because Brahma sees the Sun as long as the Sun exists, and the Sun exists until the Mahapralaya. The tremendous durations of the Yugas have probably been manufactured from the numbers 4,3,2 and 0.

It may be pointed out here, as it throws rather an interesting light on the miscalculations of the Puranic redactors that the two calculations, namely that for the Manvantara, and that for the Yuga are incommensurable. One Manvantara, being 1/14th of a day of Brahma, must consist of $71\frac{3}{7}$, so each Manu perishes in the Treta Yuga of his seventy-second Mahayuga, thus causing an *interregnum* till the beginning of the next year. But the difficulty is got over by the intercalation of Sandhi-periods, like the extra February day in Leap years.

There are many other days referred to in the Puranas for instance "the days of the Gods," the "days of the *Pitris*" and so on. The former is equal to our year, for the gods are said to dwell near the

Poles, where the days and nights are each of six months' duration. The latter is equal to one month, for the *Pitris* are located in the Moon, whose revolutions cause days and nights each of which are equal to our fifteen days.

After having said all the above, I wish to add that it describes and condemns the present condition of belief and teaching of professional Hindu priest and pandit and of typical believer, the ignorance of both to which is added cunning diplomacy in the case of the former and gullibility in the case of the latter. I should not be understood to say that there is absolutely nothing behind or below all these "traditions." I am ready to believe, if sufficient reason is brought forward, that there is some real, substantial knowledge underneath, but surely it has got greatly covered up; and that the mere outer and very ragged wrappings should be made a hypocritical means by any persons, for them to pose and masquerade as possessors of profound wisdom—this must not be tolerated. When a reasonable and satisfactory explanation or interpretation is forthcoming, it will be time to listen with respect.

Section 3.

THE CONSTITUTION OF MAN

THE PHYSICAL AND SUPER-PHYSICAL BODIES.

Man is a ray of Ishvara, this ray is ordinarily called a Jiva or Jivatma. He clothes himself first in the karanasharira or causal body, then in the sukshmasharira or desire-body, and finally in the sthula-sharira.

or physical body, through which and by which last alone action is possible in this world. We see the physical body only, and very rarely the two finer bodies, and never the Jiva, which is our real self. The Jiva never dies, but the bodies wear out and when cast off by the Jiva, are said to die.

It is what is popularly known as Spirit, and sometimes as soul—that which knows, desires and acts. Though its real nature, as Pratyagatma, is that of *samvit* or pure consciousness, yet during its life on earth, it manifests itself only in desires, actions and cognitions, all these being due to the action and interaction of the three gunas, with various combinations of which the Spirit becomes clothed during its descent.

Samvit is that condition of the Purusha in which it is aware of the existence of the functionings or modifications of the mind. The Purusha and the mind, with its functionings, exist in a sense, independently of each other. Just as while the Purusha sleeps and is unconscious, the world continues to exist, so also are the modifications of the mind always taking place though the Purusha is unaware of them. It is only when the Purusha turns his attention to these modifications that he becomes conscious of their existence. It is this consciousness by the Purusha, of the existence of the modifications of the mind, that is called 'Samvit.' It may be likened to a ray of light emanating from the Purusha, imprinting on the mind and illuminating it and thus bringing it within the purview of the Purusha.

Pratyagatma is the inner Self, that which in all things, whatsoever, manifests as the consciousness illuminating cognitions, emotions and actions. It is the simplest fact in our life, and cannot be explained any further. It is that in us, because of which we always know or 'see' our minds and bodies acting. This consciousness is never broken; this is the proof of its eternity.

The Gunas are the three attributes assumed by the Spirit, though in reality belonging to, and inhering in Prakriti, or Matter. They are (1) Sattva, purity, goodness, peace, illumination: (2) Rajas, foulness, passion, activity, motor and (3) Tamas, darkness, dulness, passivity, inertia. (1) gives rise to cognition or knowledge; (2) to activity or movement: and (3) to desire or emotion.

The above may be regarded as the broad outlines of certain beliefs which—barring subtle differences on minutia—are widespread among those who think of the higher forms of Hinduism.

The doctrine of the gunas appears to have developed out of Astronomy, where 'antariksha', the "middle" region of the moving winds, is known as 'Rajas.' After this analogy, the Earth would naturally become 'Tamas'; and the shining region beyond 'Antariksha', 'Sattva.' The Astronomer-Philosopher-Rishis began to speculate upon this, and finally ended by making the 'three gunas' a cardinal doctrine of Sankhya, from which it was later adopted by Vedanta. The question of the three gunas is very fully and luminously dealt with in "The Science of Peace" (2nd Ed.) by my brother Bhagavan Das.

The Jiva is regarded as "drashta", seer, with regard to the Samvit; and with reference to matter, as 'bhokta' the enjoyer of pleasure and pain. It has neither size nor sex, which are attributes of the bodies ensouled by it; it is their unchanging "inner-ruler" *antaryamin* having a continuous existence, and remaining one throughout its experiences, in the form of consciousness. This Jiva when united to the gunas, and thus brought into contact with bodies, has three states of consciousness, namely:—

(1) The *jagrata* or waking when the physical senses are fully active, and the Jiva has its cognitions directly through them. In this state the embodied Jiva is known by the name of "Vishva;" and Brahma presiding over such Jivas is known as "Vaishvanara" or Virata, the awarder of fruits of actions to Jivas in the forms of pleasure and pain.

(2) *Svapna* or dream-consciousness. This consists of the cognitions that the Jiva has when it dreams during sleep, during which the external sense-organs are dull and inactive; and the cognitions are due mainly to the working of the subtle senses and Vasanas, subconscious desires. In this state the Jiva is known as "Taijasa," and the corresponding name of Brahma is "Hiranyagarbha."

(3) *Sushupti* or dreamless sleep-consciousness, during which the Jiva for the time being reverts to its pristine state of *ananda* bliss, and is free from all

touch with its various limitations and encasings. During this state it is called "Prajna," and the corresponding name of Brahma is Ishvara, the "ruler of all."

(4) When separated from the bodies the Jiva is said to be in the Turiya state of pure consciousness, during which it realises its unity with the Over-Soul, Paramatma. This state differs from the last, *i.e.*, the Sushupti state in that there is still present even in dreamless sleep the seed of the idea of separateness, which makes the *ananda* transient, while in the Turiya all idea of separateness is completely lost, and the bliss attendant upon the absolute realisation of unity is permanent.

The Jiva is said to be clothed or hidden in three bodies or five sheaths according to the Vedantins. They are the 'feelers' by which the Jiva comes into contact with other Jivas and gathers experience and evolves to ever higher and higher life. The three bodies are styled, the *sthula* (physical;) the *sukshma* (subtle, fine or minute;) the *karana* (causal.) The five sheaths are known as the *prana-maya* (vital;) the *anna-maya* (food-nourished;) the *Mano-maya* (desire-nourished;) the *Vijnana-maya* (thought-nourished) and the *ananda-maya* (bliss-nourished).

Some idea of the working of the two finer *bodies* the *sukshma* and the *karana* can be gained by working back from their resulting actions to their source. For instance, when the energy surging up is muddy and destructive like a devastating lava stream, leading to a loss of will, obsession, hysteria unacy; to anti-social, immoral and anarchic thoughts and actions, we may be certain that these are the fruits of the *kamaloka*, brought about by the operation of the energies of the Desire-body shattering the barriers of the normal human will, and obtruding their hideous faces on a dismayed world. But when the energy flowing out is pre-eminently life-giving, like the clear and limpid mountain-stream, fed by the melting snows, leading to thoughts and actions which are pre-eminently social, moral, intellectual, and altruistic and are a shining beacon to the dwellers of the valleys, we may be equally certain that the influences are from the karana world, finding expression in the energisation of the Thought-body.

OTHER WORLDS

When a person dies the Jiva is technically known as a *Preta* till it has been translated into a *pitri* and is said to expiate its sins in Naraka or get rewarded for its merits in Swarga with various enjoyments of much the same kind as mundane ones in the Court of Indra. The Mitakshara of Vijnaneshwar coolly gets rid of all these statements by asserting that Swarga is no place having a definite location in space but is a state or condition. Such also is the Vedic teaching—it is सुखविशेष a special kind of pleasure for gaining which people should offer special sacrifice. Indeed this whole question of Kamaloka and pitri-loka; of Naraka and Swarga, is so utterly confused that it is not possible to extract from the books any precise and consistent teachings about them.

THE NATURE OF HELL

We will go a little more into this universally prevalent belief in a "Hell"—which be it remembered, is not the special prerogative of Hinduism alone, but plays a very conspicuous part in other religions also—for instance Christianity and Islam. The idea underlying the doctrine of Hell is that the Jiva must bear the consequences of its misdeeds. But as the sufferings undergone by the Jiva on this earth itself are the direct effects of past misdeeds, there is no room for an extra-physical 'hell.' This was the old Hindu view: it has been clearly and repeatedly stated by king Yajati in the Adi Parva of the Mahabharata, that there is no other Naraka than this very earth.

At a much later time, the perverse imagination of a venal and pampered priesthood produced 'hells' of surpassing terrors, together with the doctrine of dispensation through Prayashchitta. The hideously barbarous punishments current in those days—steeping human beings up to their lips in rotting ordure; building them up in walls and foundations; boiling them in oil; roasting them over slow fire &c, &c.,—supplied the ground work on which all sorts of possible and impossible methods of extra-physical punishments were built up. It was used as a weapon to terrorise the ignorant laity and bring them under subjection, and make them give enormous presents. The Garuda

Purana, where all these hideous horrors of 'Hell' are set forth in great detail, is a very late work and of absolutely no value. The whole doctrine is as blasphemous as it must be untrue. It is difficult enough to understand how a merciful God permits the awful sufferings that beset human and other lives on earth. That He should in other worlds, Himself inflict such savage tortures upon his creatures, and himself sit enthroned happy and peaceful, is surely not to be believed without much more potent proof than the asseveration of interested priests, who offer to secure safety from such hells if sufficient presents in cash and kind are made to them here. These 'hells' invented by the utterly corrupt and selfish priesthood might very justifiably be for those people themselves—their sins being many and varied—and not for the laity.

The popular belief is that the tortures of 'hell' are suffered by the wicked and the sinful. But it would be nearer the truth to say that the higher progressed and more refined and altruistic the individual, the worse the 'hell' for him. The misery of being unable to help, to ameliorate the life conditions of poor ignorant suffering humanity grows greater as egotism diminishes and the perception of unity increases; the finer the character, the greater the suffering: this is the real 'hell;' and from this there is neither escape, nor even the desire to escape. The real pain of it lies in an ever-growing and clearer perception of inability to help. This goes on increasing until egotism is entirely subdued and the Jiva gains Mukti by realising that *Samsara* is *avidya.*

The conception of the God of Death as the arch-inquisitor, ever divising diabolical tortures and taking delight in the harrowing sufferings of the 'damned,' is quite a modern one comparatively, due to *erotoreligious maniacs.* The older books depict him as the gracious lord of the dead, having a beautiful court attended not only by the dead, but also by the *living* Rishis.

As peoples emerge from their earlier unsophisticated conditions and learn to ask awkward questions, the teachings about Heaven and Hell begin to lose their force. The expected pleasures of the former and the threatened terrors of the latter remain effective buttresses to moral sanctions and do their Police work in a fairly satisfactory way only so long as the units, composing a community, are contented to take their theology second-hand from their priests and their social discipline continues to be as merciless as any military discipline. But when the herd-instinct is beginning to lose its intensity before the force of individualism such sand-based sanctions naturally begin to give way. The utterly disproportionate nature of the rewards promised and the penalties threatened begins to revolt the aroused conscience, which now sees in them sources of great demoralisation instead of bulwarks of morality.

REBIRTH.

After a certain period, which varies for each Jiva, depending as it does upon the amount of good done by it in its previous birth, and upon the exhaustion of the fruits of which he is again hurled back into embodied existence in this world, its new life commences again as man or woman. This is the famous doctrine of transmigration on which all our philosophy of life is based, and a large part of our theology and ritual has been evolved in the hope of expediting the Jiva's path towards liberation from repeated birth and death. Hindu teaching about re-birth however is not that of a progressive evolution from lower to higher: all sorts of 'frog-jumps' are indulged in. A human Jiva as the result of Karma may become in its next earth-life, a tree, a stone, a filthy vermin. This doctrine enunciated in most of the current Smritis and Puranas does not appeal to the thoughtful mind and is not in accord, with the law of evolution. Curiously even the beauty loving and logical Greeks held to this irrational and absurd belief. Abu-Yakub of Sijistan, a country beyond Sindh, seems to have been the first teacher according to Alberuni, who evolved a more sensible system out of this bewildering chaos, so repugnant to human dignity, about 1100 years ago. He definitely taught that the soul never over-stepped the barriers of the species in the process of reincarnation. The great Persian Sufi Poet, Maulana Rumi, has also taught this. The modern Theosophists have added to this the idea of a gradual pilgrimage of the soul through pre-mineral, mineral, vegetable, animal, human and supra-human forms in a steadily ascending scale.

The educated Hindu is discarding the old crude idea in favour of this more symmetrical one. All this is due to the infiltration of the Western scientific thought and the doctrine of evolution, from simple to complex, from lower to higher, from inorganic to organic.

The doctrine of the transmigration of the soul is unknown to Zoroastrian scriptures. Neither do the Vedic Samhitas contain any statement of the doctrine. The earliest reference to it seems to occur only in the Chhandogya Upanishad.

Section 4.

THE DOCTRINE OF KARMA

The birth and evolution of the above doctrine seem to be, in a large measure, due to the obtrusive existence in flourishing material conditions, of wicked people; and the equally obtrusive existence in deplorable material conditions of the 'god-fearing' and pious folk. The vengeful and the pitiful sentiments were being constantly hurt by sights of successful roguery and of unsuccessful piety. The outraged conscience could not bear the strain much longer, and so the hypothesis of a law of rewards and punishments in the life after death was gradually evolved.

After a time it was felt that the mere faith in law of karma was not a sufficient remedy for alleviating the pain of outraged emotions, and a further evolution of the theory became necessary. To the rewards and punishments in the state after death, which were *adrishta i. e.*, beyond ken, was superadded a *drishta phala*, (fruition within ken) that is to say, rewards and punishments were meted out in the world of the living as well, according to the as yet unexhausted good or bad actions of the Jiva brought over from past births. This naturally was much more satisfactory; there could be little scepticism over it. The bad man who flourished had a stock of good karma yet unexhausted to his credit, while the sufferings of the good man were due to some as yet unexhausted evil karma. This way of looking at the rise of the law of Karma helps us to see the connection between it and the doctrine of Hell and of transmigration.

The modern Hindu does not realise that none of these three doctrines have a home in the Vedas. The Vedas represent a state of society which was small and compact and homogeneous and which had not evolved individual responsibility. The community as a whole was responsible for the actions of its individual components and the evil done by any unit was expiated by them as an organic whole, and the individual was not left to shoulder his burden all by himself. As the societies grew in size, they naturally grew more complex and lost their homogeneity; and so communal responsibility began to give way before the slowly arising individualism which became the parent of the doctrines of transmigration, then Hell then Karma. The Vedic heaven is a mental, an emotional, state of peculiar bliss, and not a material place with a definite location in space. The Swarga of this latter kind is also a later evolution. This law of Karma, as a man sows so he reaps, is the key-stone of the arch over which has been built up, through the course of ages, the vast edifice of Hinduism. Knock this out and the splendid structure crumbles to the ground. It is no wonder then that we so strenuously pin our faith to it, and defend this vital position against all attacks. We are prepared under the various modern stresses—economic, social etc., to loosen our hold on many another practice and belief regarded as fundamental in the earlier days, but not on this.

This fundamental doctrine of transcendent interest to the continuance and dissemination of Hindu culture may be formulated thus: Every thought, desire and conation, whether it eventuates in a visible act or not, leaves behind it a *samskara* (sometimes also called a *vasana*) *i. e.*, a disposition, a tendency, an impression, a seed-germ, a modification of the substance of the mind, which 'bears fruit'; and when the proper time comes necessarily determines the course of future thoughts, desires and conations. It is to this Samskara that Shri Krishna has referred when in advising the unwilling Arjuna to fight, he says: प्रकृतिस्त्वां नियोक्ष्यति 'there is that in thee which will not allow thee to refuse to battle.' Thus stated it is easy to perceive that this law of Karma means neither free-will, nor Fatalism; but that it corresponds to what Western Psychologists call Determinism. This determination of the present by the past, the unphilosophic call adrishta, (unseen cause); apurva (without a visible cause) etc.

This karma is divided into three kinds, namely :—

(1) *Sanchita* "gathered up in previous births" a name given to the aggregate of the force of past thoughts, desires, and actions, which exists as the potential cause of endless future births, that which is not likely to be manifested into activity during present life; it is a sort of reserve of character not to be drawn upon during present life.

(2) *Prarabdha* 'begun' a name given to the active factor of the Karma, that which is to take effect in one definite incarnation of the Jiva. Prarabdha includes those tendencies which have become so fixed that it is not possible to prevent their manifestation. They can be exhausted only by manifestation.

(3) *Agami* 'augmentative' is a name applied to the forces set in motion by the actions done by the Jiva during the present life. But Agami (also called kriyamana) Karma, as well as Sanchita may be neutralised in a certain way. Such generally is the educated belief on the subject.

The way this law affects the Jivas is that when a Jiva is born, it begins from the moment of birth to experience and work out the results of his Prarabdha Karma; and this process goes on and on until the Prarabdha Karma is exhausted and the Jiva attains to Brhama-Jnana; after this, even though he continues to perform actions he gathers no Agami Karma, these do not affect him personally in any way, because his Ahamkara, has fallen off. The force, however set in motion by these actions cannot be wholly destroyed it gets deflected, and is utilised in the helping of other Jivas. These actions thus having no binding force for that Jiva, he' attains Mukti, (deliverance,) after having worked off all his Prarabdha Karma. The Sanchita Karma also becomes neutralised with the dropping of the sense of separate individuality.

Many people have a curious way of regarding Karma as a deposit account with a bank and feel that they must *seek* pain and misery that they may secure a good balance at their bank, or work off past deposits of bad Karma and wipe off debts, as a bankrupt does in the insolvency court. But it is only the development of the virtues in one's character and the positive helping of others that can counteract the effects of the evil emotions of the past, and not mere suffering as such.

Rightly understood, this law teaches the doctrine of strenuous action, and not that of passive fatalism ; it insists on the necessity of a full-bodied activity in all the phases of existence—physical, social, moral, intellectual and spiritual. The doctrine of 'fatalism' has no existence in fact; it exists only in words; it is in its very essence opposed to human nature, which can never remain quiescent, it must assert itself; this innate power which drives humanity into action has been called the 'instinct of workmanship." As a fact there is not one thoroughgoing 'fatalist' in the world, who carries his doctrine into practice.

By one-self the evil is done, by one-self one suffers; by one-self evil is left undone, by one-self one is purified. The pure and the impure stand by themselves; no one can purify another.

DHARMA AND ADHARMA

In the early Mimamsa literature, the Karma that is discussed is the bloody sacrifices of the Veda and not the philosophic doctrine of retribution. But during the gradual evolution of Hinduism from the age of the Vedic sacrifices to the present age, when the Agama rites have supplanted them, the connotation of the word has been slowly changing.

So too the meanings of the Dharma and Adharma. These two have no absolute import, and their connotations change with the changing beliefs of the people. For, philosophically speaking, while there is no change in the goal itself, there is constant change in the paths which lead towards it. The goal is Dharma which is in accord with the progressive, building up aspect of the Divine Will; whatsoever is opposed to it is Adharma. All theological strife arises out of the differing methods of regarding a way as being in discord or in concord with Divine purpose.

The purpose of this Divine Will is seen in the evolution of the world around us by the wise men who study nature and our Rishis have explained it in the Shastras, as they understood this working of God in Nature. We should, therefore, always be careful to interpret the Shastras in accordance with the Will of God as revealed in Nature, whenever this is unmistakable, and not in a narrow philological or theological spirit, as is but too often done by a bigoted priesthood.

We see in this world that life depends on life, form on form. One form breaks up to be built into another, better and more expressive; one life passes away to give place to another, higher and more progressive; cruder forms are ever making room for finer, meaner life for nobler. Such seems to be the case in non-human nature at least. This process is called Evolution; and it is as much a process of pain as of pleasure; for while assimilation, expansion, growth, bring pleasure, this is ever preceded by a disintegration, breaking up, which means pain. Therefore, to be in accord with the Divine Will, or the purpose of evolution is to bear pain as readily as pleasure, for the sake of a fuller and richer life. This is the true Dharma. That human life often presents the opposite spectacle, of what has not been inaptly called, "the survival of the unfittest," is the result of collective A-Dharma. But Nature and the God of Nature are always making flowers out of manure also, on the one hand, if they make manure out of flowers too, and the retrogressions and unintelligible happenings of human life, sacrifices of the good, the strong, the handsome, for the sake of the opposite—these have their own beneficent results, and

"Stretch a hand through time to catch
The far off interest of tears."

Note: For a detailed treatment of the Law of Karma see the Sankhya-Tattva Kaumudi, the Gita, and the Suta-Samhita.

Section 5.

YAJNA.

Through the various phases of the growth of Hinduism the idea that all life should be a sacrifice, an offering, a Yajna has run like a golden thread. In the earliest ages this took the shape of the sacrifice of men, cows, horses, goats and so on, the sacrifice of others. In later times it underwent various modifications till it evolved into the highest possible form, Self-sacrifice, Atma-yajna, the sacrifice of the fruits of action, th doing of duty because it was duty. This purposeful foregoing of pleasure and possession, the undergoing of pain and privation for the mere sake of doing good to other beings, is the trumpet-toned teaching of the Gita, and has become the current faith of all thoughtful Hindus.

By divine yajna the universe has been manifested, and by the continuous yajna of all beings it is maintained. A well conducted human life ought to consist of a constant practice of this fundamental Dharma of well-directed sacrifice. The Jivatma, in the earlier stages of its manifestation, cannot impress this lesson on its *Manas* from inside, so to say, the Manas has to learn this lesson involuntarily from Nature, from outside as it were. As the control of the Jivatma over the Manas grows, this Dharma begins to be practised voluntarily and with joy, till the Jivatma can become an unhampered co-worker with Ishvara, the source and fount of all sacrifice, all cosmic activity being a process of giving by Ishvara, the giving of his own life-energy to others, without any expectation of repayment. The yajnas referred to in the Vedas and expounded in the Brahmanas, and later, systematised in the Shrauta-Sutras, are mere ritualistic embodiments of this fundamental principle, suited to the conditions of life prevalent in ancient India. That these conditions were far from refined will be clear to any one who studies the Samhitas. The buffooneries and obscenities are too gross to be mentioned in any but the old Vedic language, as an unbiased perusal of the Ashvamedha ritual, described in the Yajur-Veda would show. Certain methods of sacrificing the animals also are extremely brutal like some of the methods of the civilised slaughter-houses and food-packers of the West to-day, every orifice being closed, the animal is pounded to death by the fists of the officiating priests, (as 'veal' is said to be prepared in the West). All this however revolted the developed humanity of a later age and made it evolve the system of 'pista-pashu', by which the live sacrificial animals came to be replaced by figures made of dough; and the feeling against sacrifices continued to grow till they have been practically suppressed all over India. In those ancient times, people who did not believe in these bloody sacrifices and rituals were called *Nastiks.* It should be noted that while blood-sacrifices and drinking-revels in the name and with the forms of Vedic religion have practically disappeared, animal sacrifices before various idols are common and flesh-food and spirituous drinks have not diminished very much.

As regards some of the greater and more elaborate sacrifices—*e. g.*, those of Man, Cow and Horse—attempts have been made from time to time, to explain them away and read allegorical meanings in them, instead of the naked truth. These attempts at covering up the marks of the old state of morality may do credit to the sensitive feeling and the patriotism of the allegorists ; but they fail to convince. Some day perhaps similar attempts may be made to explain away the customs of Sati and Infanticide—customs which even the spread of education and the efforts of the British Government have not yet succeeded in stamping out wholly. It should be noted here however, that the modern 'civilised' West—with its literal millions of animals slaughtered and of bottles of alcohol manufactured daily, for the food and drink of refined men and women, and its equal millions of wage-slaves, including women and children, grinding away to support the comparative few in luxury, and its thousands upon thousands of prostitutes in every large town—has no right to crow over the Vedic morality, whatever it might have been, in any way.

The word Nastika has a whole history behind it.

It now means 'one who denies the existence of God.' But in Hindu literature, the word has a much narrower application. It is applied to one who repudiates the authority of the sacrificial and ritualistic section of the Vedas; and not necessarily to one who denies the existence of God. This fact is well brought out by the inclusion of the Sankhya and the Mimamsa philosophies among the Astika, (as opposed to the Nastika) systems, and this simply because they nominally accept the authority of the Vedas—even though deny the existence of an extra-cosmical, personal God. The word carries a theological odium with it and is currently used as a term of opprobrium by the so-called orthodox for all those who have the misfortune to differ from them.

In the Vedic sense of the term, the Vaishnava is as much a Nastika as the Jaina or the Bauddha. He also, like the Jaina, lays great stress on Ahimsa, and repudiates Vedic sacrifices. A particular sect of the Vaishnavas headed by Madhvacharya, has tried to effect a compromise by accepting the authority of the sacrificial texts but substituting offerings of grain for those of living animals, the well-known pishta-pashumimamsa.

Accurately speaking the word Nastika is of philosophic import, and should be used only of one who denies the reality of phenomenal existence, in contrast with the sarvasti-vadin—the materialist opponent of the maya-vadin—who affirms the reality of phenomenal existence. Rightly understood then the word will cease to be an easily flung popular term of abuse, and be applicable only to learned Vedantins.

CHANGING HINDUISM.

Before concluding this first part of the book, it is necessary to point out again that the Hinduism of to-day was not the Hinduism of the days when the Vedic Samhitas began to come into existence, that, in short, it has been steadily changing its Theology, its Pantheon, its rituals, its social practices; in fact its whole character. The impassioned denials of such change, by the fervent preachers of Sanatana Dharma, will bear the light of historical criticism as little as the no less impassioned harangues of the truculent Arya Samajists—denying the lineal descent of present day Hinduism from the Samhitas—in their misdirected efforts to harken back to the long dead past and shut out completely the later developments.

We can steadily and unerringly trace the manifold changes that have either suddenly or gradually crept into it, by studying the influence of the Brahmanas, the Upanishads, the Gitas, the Sutras, and the Smritis; every one of these initiated changes and introduced new religious ideas. The Acharyas of later days, from Shankaracharya down to Swami Dayananda, and the numerous intermediate ones like Chaitanya, Nanak, Kabir, Dadu, Tukaram, Tulasi Das, Sur Das all attempted to adapt the religion to changing conditions. All these may well be called minor Avataras; for "wherever there is greatness there am I," says Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita. Who can deny the tremendous influence that such great historical schisms (as those of Jainism first and Buddhism afterwards) exercised in the course of centuries, in modifying the Vedic Hinduism and, in conjunction with Vaishnavism, killing for good the ancient Vedic ritual of bloody sacrifices and firmly establishing in the hearts of all Hindus the doctrine of *ahimsa paramo dharmah* (non-killing is the highest Dharma)?

This process of change, of adaptation to environment, is going on to-day—as in fact in every other living religion—and truth to tell, at a very much accelerated pace than it has ever before done in the history of the world. It is so because, most literally speaking, it is the 'age of iron.' The mechanical modes of traction have brought the formerly distant places and peoples so near each other as to produce bitter race-antagonisms for which the impossible remedy of territorial exclusion has been suggested by the late Lord Bryce, though supposed to be one of England's greatest philosophic-statesmen. This coming together of different race-cultures and race-characters has naturally produced a very great amount of friction; but ultimately, though at the cost of much suffering, there is bound to be mutual adjustment, adaptation and harmonisation. The printing press has been another vast force in shaking old-world prejudices and beliefs, and creating new ones of its own at a terrific pace. Few of us realise that for centuries India has been becoming the most cosmopolitan country in the world. There has been such a tremendous boiling over, such a clash of opposing forces—religious, political, racial, social—that each class or group of individuals has undergone a rubbing of its angularities, time after time, till all are learning the lesson of harmonious living, of give and take.

Real creeds continually diverge from nominal creeds, and adapt themselves to the ever changing social and individual requirements of the Jiva, and it is by this power of adaptation that their force over the imaginations and actions of their votaries should be judged. If they were really rigid, they would quickly cease to be forces to be reckoned with. It is because in reality it has, at bottom, a marvellous power of suiting itself to the needs of the times underneath all the professions of eternal changelessness of its custodians, that Hinduism has continued to exist, inspite of all disintegrating influences, whether from inside or outside.

Being thus an active living religion, it has naturally undergone a great many changes, due to various causes, in the long course of ages through which it has existed—some good and wholesome, others bad and injurious. To meet these everchanging circumstances our religious books have been subjected to various editings, and also new works have been composed, from time to time, as the need for meeting the altered conditions arose, though not always wisely or successfully. Shri Krishna has clearly pointed out in the Bhagavad-Gita that the living spirit of God cannot be squeezed and confined within the four corners of any book, however sacred it may be considered. As, for the proper progress and development of physical life, it is necessary that the forces of construction should be balanced by the forces of destruction, and that there should be a constant adjustment of these two opposing forces; so for the inner life it is no less necessary that there should be an atrophy and death and removal of effete ideas, customs, rituals and beliefs to keep harmonious pace with the evershifting environment.

Inspiration or revelation is not a disconnected, arbitrary, limited process occurring only once in the history of the world as all bibliolaters of every faith assert. On the contrary, it is a steady continuous process occurring every moment of life, and it is a denial of God to assert anything to the contrary. The world-manifestation is the only true and real Revelation of the Spirit of God, which is ever becoming, and never complete. This eternal truth is beginning to spread slowly even in Islam through the teachings of the great Persian Prophets of modern times, which the world knows under the earlier name of Babi—ism and the later one of Babaism.

Hinduism is not 'this' or 'that'. It is an attitude, a discipline, a philosophy of life. You may discard 'this' or 'that' but you are still a Hindu provided your view-point of life is the right one. Ceremonials and customs are only the shells cloaking and guarding the inner life and a stage arrives when the shell must be cast off if the life within is not to be choked to death. Interested priest-hoods all the world over (and especially so when they happen to be hereditary, when the preservation of the species becomes a matter of life and death to them) have always sought to suppress the *spirit* of the religions they profess and have always laid stress on the *forms*. Can husks support life? It is life alone that can support life.

Yet there is also one truth, and it is the deepest Truth, which doth not flee or change or require to be kept abreast of. It abides in the heart of the would-be pursuer himself. It is Himself, the One Universal self, in which all things else live and move and have their being. And this truth, the law of all being and all beings, is Infinite and Eternal. And since it is the very basis the foundation of Hinduism; because Hinduism through all changes of rites and ceremonies and formalities, has clung to this essential and eternal truth therefore in this sense and this alone, may Hinduism be called the Sanatana, the Eternal, Dharma.

"Our little systems have their day,
They have their day, and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O God, art more than they."
Tennyson.

"New occasions teach new duties,
Time makes ancient good uncouth;
They must ever up and onward,
Who would keep abreast of truth."
Lowell.

"Old orders change and yield up place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in endless ways,
Yet that which is fulfilled, that is Himself,
Remaineth Changeless, Full, Eternally."

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते ।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥ ॐ ॥

PART II.

Rites and Customs

"The past will always win,
A glory from its being far;
And orb into the perfect star,
We saw not when we moved therein."

Tennyson.

CHAPTER I.

Section 1.

NATURE AND GROWTH OF CUSTOMS.

EVERY aggregation of human beings, in whatever stage of savagery or civilisation they may be, must observe a number of 'rules of behaviour' and gain coherence thereby; otherwise they will split up either by internal strife or by outside pressure. These 'rules of behaviour', when sheer lapse of time has produced forgetfulness of the reason that brought them into existence take on a very rigid character, to depart from which is regarded as sacrilege and punished most severely. Conversion or apostacy is nothing more than the giving up of the rituals of the religion or theology into which one is born, in favour of another. It is a very different thing to the evolution of rituals, in which while an earlier ritual is given up in favour of another, the change is seldom violent, is gradual, almost unperceived; the historical continuity remaining unbroken. For instance, we see that modern Hinduism while so far distant from its earliest Vedic phase as to be totally opposed to many of the precepts and practices of those early days, is still a direct offspring of the lore of the Vedic seers; but this is not the case with the new faith of those Hindus who have been forced to embrace Islam; even though some of the rituals of this latter faith may tally with those of the former, there is no question of historical continuity, or vital, organic connection between the two. They are different religions.

These old tribal customs are not so unalterably rigid that they can never be modified. There is always, in the case of every such group of customs, a continuous struggle, silent or blatant, going on for the purpose of adapting them to the ever-shifting environment. The change becomes more difficult when these happen to get embodied into books, which speedily take on a sacrosanct character. The ingrained conservatism of humanity prevents rapid adaptation. The usages are clung to tenaciously, and are modified only when the pressure becomes irresistible. The curious phenomenon is presented all the world over that usages and rituals of any given community are at a lower level than the general progress of the community in ethical feeling and intellectual development would suggest, at the time.

THE SPECIAL RITES AND USAGES OF HINDUISM.

Some of the special rituals and usages which demarcate Hinduism from other 'isms' are (1) the Samskaras, (2) Upasana, (3) Shraddha, (4) Shanti,

(5) Vrata, (6) Dana, (7) Ashrama, (8) Prayashchitta, (9) Shaucha and (10) Varna.

We shall take them up in the serial order and treat them in detail.

(1) Samskaras or Sacraments are ceremonies performed at certain stated periods of a person's life. While the roots of some of these lie in the pre-vedic period more than six thousand years ago, the larger number of them are much later; and it is indeed very doubtful if every one of them was ever rigidly performed. Their character and methods of performance too have been undergoing a steady change, so that to-day our observance of even those which we still persist in observing is far different both in spirit and ritual from the days of the Grihya Sutras. The purpose of these Sacraments is to give a person who is born to Hindu parents full standing in the community. Without these, the person is outside the pale of Hinduism, and cannot be allowed to take part in the social and religious duties and ceremonies of the caste in which he was born. But such a terrible fate never befalls any one. These rituals begin from before conception and do not end with his death, but go on till the fourth generation from the person concerned has come into existence. In the Samhitas themselves and in the Brahmanas even, there is practically nothing about these rituals, they are all the growth of the post-vedic age. Another fact to be borne in mind is, that with the evident exception of two, namely Nama-Karana and Vivaha,

which are common to all mankind, the sacraments are primarily meant for the Brahmana. The Shudra is not at all admitted: while there is a great split over the admission of Kshattriyas and Vaishyas ; some maintain the position that only Brahmanas have the right to these sacraments, other bolder ones cut the gordian knot by asserting that there are no Kshattriyas and Vaishyas in this Kali age, but only Brahmanas and Shudras ; while a third set are willing to concede that the Kshattriyas and Vaishyas, are also dvi-jas twice-born, and so have a right to the Sacraments.

THE TRUE NATURE OF THE SAMSKARAS.

The Samskaras have little to do with religion, and in their origin are wholly social observances, except in the sense that the Hindu regards every one of his actions as an act of religion. To take for instance garbhadhana or impregnation, what does a careful study of the mantras used on the occasion reveal ? As far as one can see there is no trace of religion in them, but instead they are full of exciting words and ideas which would not be possible to utter in the vernaculars, in ordinary company, for reasons of decorum. Their present religious character lies in their being in a language not commonly understood. Similarly the Simantonnayana, or the parting of the hair, was to show publicly by an outward symbol that the woman had fulfilled the reason of her existence by becoming a mother and, so to say, had become consecrated and was no more a virgin. Take yet again a third, Puṅsavan or the assuring of a male fetus. It consists in the swallowing of many different things resembling a phallus by the pregnant woman accompanied by a muttered incantation in the hope that these would turn into a fleshly phallus and that the babe to be born would be neither a neuter or a female, but a male.

It may perhaps serve some purpose to point out that this problem of sex-control, which is very very old, has been given its quietus, at least for a time, by the researches of Professor Loeb of America. He has shown that the determining cause in the production of sex differentiation lies so deep down in the organism, that there never will be a possibility of acquiring control over it. (*Vide* " The Mechanistic Conception of Life" Biologica Essays, p. 18. The University of Chicago Press) also " Sex " by Thomson and Geddes (Home University Library series). But as the *desire* of obtaining such control is persistent, its impossibility will never be realised and the vain attempts will continue to be as rife as ever.

It may be difficult if not impossible for persons who have not assimilated the teachings of Anthropology and still less grasped the Psychology of a crowd, and especially a Hindu, who is instinctively well-disciplined and well-behaved, how such practices as those of the Punsavana are possible; for their benefit I will quote here a paragraph from Prof. Welton's " The Logical Bases of Education " He says:—" Now it may seem strange that such belief have been able to survive for so many generations notwithstanding the continual contradictions they must have received from experience. Indeed, this would be inexplicable were it not for another piece of experience—the fact of the marked conservatism which human nature shows with regard to its beliefs. Prejudice is an enormous force in human life, and not less potent is that mental inertia which makes it hard for men to strike out a new line of thought for themselves. 'It is not error' wrote Turgot, 'which opposes the progress of Truth; it is indolence, obstinacy, the spirit of routine, everything that favours inaction."

In India unfortunately, even to-day, the pressure exerted against any would-be enquirer, if the results of his enquiry and research tend in the least degree against the old established order of things, is so tremendous that few can survive it. Yet we all glibly assert that thought is free and has been free in India, and we utterly refuse to see the vanity and baselessness of this assumption. The fact is that while one might *think* what he likes, his *utterance* has to be very carefully guarded and his *practice* has to conform to the customs of his sub-caste, on pain of social boycott, if not actual physical violence.

THE SAMSKARAS

To come back to our main purpose, namely the description of the Samskaras. Their number was steadily added to till they reached a total of fifty-two. A fifty-third sacrament has also been in existence since very early days, namely, karna-vedha, boring the lobes of both the ears. It comes between Chaulam and Upanayanam. This is performed on boys as well as on girls. The nose-boring of the latter did not rise to the dignity of a Samskara, though important to the last degree—and indeed indispensable, for every married woman. It is also a question whether Godana *i. e.*, beard-shaving in the 16th year is a part of Samavartana or a fifty-fourth sacrament. The proper conventional number however is forty-eight only, the rest being left out of the count. An analysis of the sacred literature with a view to ascertaining the history of the origin and order of birth of these would furnish valuable information about our religious development. Out of this very large number, even the names of which are unknown outside the books only a very few continue to be performed. The rite of Nama-Karana is unavoidable and has to be performed for every child, but it has very largely become a purely secùlar matter. Then comes Chaulam. It persists because it is necessary for every male Hindu to have a shikha, the top-knot of hair. Then comes the ear-boring ceremony. Finally, the two most important ones are Upanayana and Vivaha; and it is only this last one that is of universal interest, for it affects everyone and has no caste limitations about it, as has the 'thread' ceremony, for instant.

UPANAYANA

Upanayana is the Vedic ceremony par excellence of the twice-born castes. Its function is analogous to that of the Matriculation Examination of the modern Universities; namely, to open the way to the Vedic University. It is only after the boy has passed through this rite that he comes to be known as a Dwija, twice-born. Anthropology tells us that some such rite of a second birth is practically universal. Among many savage tribes in the distant places of the world, it takes on a very realistic character. The boy who is to be initiated into the tribal mysteries and to become thenceforward a full member, is made to crouch down between the legs of his mother, or some other woman if the mother be dead, who then stimulates labour-pains, and after an interval the boy is pulled out crowing like a newborn baby. With us the acharya, the initiator, is regarded as the father and the Savitri-mantra is regarded as the mother, and the initiation takes place under a covering cloth hiding both the initiator and the initiated, till the whispering of the mantra in the boy's ear is over. The Parsi initiation consists in investing the child with the 'shirt,' sadara and the girdle, kusti. This latter is generally taken by Hindus to correspond to their 'thread,' which is a mistake. It corresponds to the Mekhala, the girdle, put on at the time of the Upanayana and which ought to be worn all along with the 'thread.' But here again modern custom has coolly dropped an injunctive rite. The Moslem initiation into the Islamic brotherhood has strangely come to be the ancient barbaric rite of circumcision; a rite widely prevalent among savages and even among certain Christian sects in Russia. where the girls too are circumcised, as they are among some savage tribes also. The Koran nowhere lays it down as a rite to be necessarily performed, and Muhammad never said anything either against or for it. It seems that as it was customary among the Jews and the Arabs, Islam dared not meddle with it. (*Vide* The Hibbert Journal for 1910. The article is the work of a learned Musalman; but he has not dared to sign it.)

The age for Upanayana, is generally the eighth year; but it may come down as low as the fifth year for the Brahmana, and go up as high as the twenty-fourth year for the Vaishya. Its chief features are the investiture with the triple thread, the girdle, and the shoulder covering or Yajna-pata, and the taking of the vow of Brahmacharya. Now-a-days, the whole ceremonial has been emptied completely of its ancient content, and has become a time of family rejoicing and show. Instead of being the beginning of a period of Theological studies and spiritual meditation, it has degenerated in many sub-castes into a mere prelude to marriage. The girdle is altogether dropped, and is replaced by a thin silk or cotton girdle known as Kardhani in U. P., and this too is being discarded. The shoulder coverings of different kinds have given place to the common shoulder-wrap of whatever material, and the three kinds of thread to the universal twisted cotton thread. The wearing of this so-called "sacred" thread at all times has become habitual now. It seems that formerly it was used to be worn only when the person was, so to say, on duty; taking part in sacrifices, in Vedic studies, or going round begging his food and so on. That in ancient times it was worn only at sacrificial sessions and not habitually is apparent from certain passages in the Taittiriya Aranyaka, and also from the fact that even the Grihya Sutras do not make any mention of the permanent wearing; this is mentioned only in the later Bhashyas, chiefly in the Gadadhara-Bhashya on Katyayana's Sutras. The winding of the thread round the right ear which is done now-a-days when performing those natural functions, which bring ceremonial pollution may be regarded as a modern substitute of a living organic peg for an inanimate and outside one, a relic of the ancient habit of hanging it upon an external resting-place after the sacrificial session was over. That the Yajnopavita of the Vedic days was either a cloth or skin and was not meant for perpetual wear is clearly shown in Taittriya Aranyaka II. I. It is defined there as:— "Covering the right (side of the trunk only) with skin or cloth, and exposing the right shoulder and arm, and throwing the skin or cloth over the left shoulder is Yajnopavitam; the opposite way of putting on the skin or cloth is Prachinavitam; while Samvitam is the covering of both the shoulders with the skin or the cloth. This last is said to be the 'human' mode of dressing, while the first is to be used when one engages in propitiating Devas, and the second when propitiating Pitris. The Mimamsa (Sutra 10, P. III, A. III) makes it an accessory of the Darsha-purnamasa sacrifice. A general name for the cloth or skin is uttariya. The Sutras reduced it to a string of Kusha grass; thus making it easier for it to be worn, and then enlarging the number of occasions on which it should be worn. Apastamba says that it should be worn while saluting teachers, old men, and guests; during homa, japa, meals, achamana, and recitation of the Veda. This certainly means that even so late as two thousand years ago, and probably till very many centuries later, it had not become habitual to wear it constantly.

Now-a-days the ceremony is performed by Hindus only for boys—unlike the Parsis who have kept up the older practice of doing it for both boys and girls; the girls are debarred from it; for them, marriage is regarded as the 'Upanayana.' Here lies the root of the evil which made it possible for the Pandits to misapply these texts as authorities for fixing the proper marriageable age of girls, and thus reduce it to seven. The Arya Samajists are trying to revive the older practice by investing girls also. In the ordinary current Hindu practice of the ceremony, the vow of Brahmacharya and Savitri-vrata is taken only to be broken the next minute so to say. No boy ever goes to his preceptor's house to be invested with the thread and to dwell with him thereafter. The long period of residential studentship, not less than twelve years, and which may extend by multiples of twelve or even be life long, has dropped out of even the dreams of the modern generation of the Brahmanas. I have purposely referred here only to Brahamanas for I cannot but regard the Grihya Sutra assumption that these long periods of theological training were meant for all the members of the three twice-born castes as nothing more than priestly schematism. The warrior and the merchant would scarce be able to spare the time from the special training required for their avocations, to waste it on acquiring ritual lore, which they could never utilise. While stray individuals might attempt the discipline, normally each class or caste would study the arts and sciences fitted to advance its special interests in life.

For centuries now the ritual has been nothing more than a formal device for bolstering up the artificial caste-barriers of post-Vedic India. Now-a-days the empty shell is again being utilised by being made the receptacle of a 'social content'. It gives a man a social status to have the thread hanging from his shoulders, something like the titles and medals bestowed by the British Government, and by thus making him feel kinship with the Vedic Rishis, ministers to the natural vanity of the man. The 'thread' might well be a force for good, as the simple conventional badge of the Aryan Indian 'gentleman,' and a source of proper self-respect and pride in ancestry, if other indispensable conditions were fulfilled. So in these days it is becoming a general practice among large sections of the community, who are trying to rise in the caste-scale, to start by donning the thread. In the Punjab, even the barbers wear it, and if without it are not allowed to officiate at ceremonies. And quite rightly too. For the barber according to the authority of the Grihya Sutras has to repeat certain Vedic Mantras while performing the tonsure—a fact which the later narrow-minded theological writers have tried to whittle down.

It would simplify the work of the Kalki Avatara considerably if a great religious leader could arise and invest every one with the thread and initiate him into the Gayatri. It is a fatal mistake some of the modern reformers commit, who discard the 'thread'. Psychology should teach them that attempts to discard, to drive out with mere blindly destructive zeal what they regard as fraud and superstition, will only help to rivet the rite more strongly. The only way to lessen its value is to make it universal, quite common, levelling up and not levelling down. As Tennyson has said:—"And Common is the common-place." You only succeed in irritating a Maharaja by calling him a Raja, but you immensely please a Raja if you call him a Maharaja.

Incidentally, if may be mentioned as an unintelligible curiosity, that the British-Indian Government, solemnly pledged to religious neutrality as it is, should be opposed to the extension of the cult of wearing the sacred thread. It came out in the notorious case, known as the Howrah Gang Case, which was tried in 1910 before the Chief Justice of Bengal, during the evidence of Surjan Singh of the 10th Jat Regiment, that an order had been issued by the military authorities that any Jat wearing a sacred thread was to be regarded as a bad man and was to be expelled from the army.

Before closing this section, I would call the attention of my co-religionists to the very significant fact that the Sanyasis, regarded as having a higher status than even the Brahmana, are persons who have discarded the Shikha and the Sutra—by having risen above the necessity for such conventions, which are meant only as a disciplinary force for the "householder" masses. Sanyasis are not regarded as Vratyas, as those are who have never undergone the ritual. Usage has made of this stately ceremonial a ludicrous travesty. As no son of a twice-born is a twice-born till he has undergone this rite, but is an outcaste—a Vratya—and so cannot secure a wife for himself, the initiation therefore becomes a necessity even in the cases of persons born deaf or dumb or both. There is witnessed the spectacle of pertinacious clinging to the letter that killeth. The mantras are 'written' on water, and the water swallowed by the boy who forthwith becomes a Dwija. Such travesties of customs, good and useful in themselves, are to be found in all societies, of all ages and all countries.

SANDHYOPASANA

Before entering into the details of what constitutes 'worship', upasana, it is necessary to say a few words about Mantras. For it is only by and through the help of Mantras that Upasanas can be performed. An old Samskrit saying—Mantradhinashcha Devatah (gods and goddesses are subject to the power of the Mantra)—pithily sums up the situation.

Now what is a Mantra? Briefly, it is an arrangement of sounds and svaras, which, it is believed, when muttered or uttered under proper conditions, will place a person in intimate touch with that particular god or goddess, for whom that particular collocation of sounds was specially devised, somewhat as a human being is hailed by his name.

They are of two kinds:—Bija and Hymn-like. The former represent mere tones, and may well be called "Tone-mantras"; they are by their very nature untranslatable; but the books break even these up into separate syllables and assign meanings to each separate syllable. The Pranava, for instance, has been broken up into the familiar A. U. M. It has also been broken up into a less known seven-syllable affair. Much absurd mystery is made to hang round the Bija mantras which are but meaningless and often strained combinations of sounds like Hrim, Shrim; and some bad imitations of the inarticulate cries of animals like the goat, the bull &c., as a delicate flattery perhaps, to the god Shiva who is said to have endowed his father-in-law with a goat's head, and rides a bull; also perhaps to remind the devotee that he is but a Pashu, an animal, in the presence of his Lord, the Pashupati, the Lord of animals. The only representatives of the second kind are the Vedic Mantras, which have a definite meaning, and are translatable. They were poems of old days composed on various occasions and which were utilized as Mantras by the later compilers, Vyasas, of the different Samhitas, when their original purpose was forgotten. These may well be called "hymn-mantras."

The Rishis who composed these Mantras, gathered now in the four Samhitas, intended to convey to the Devata concerned or the people around them, their wishes, hopes and inspirations in an *intelligible* language, so that these might be satisfied and the emotional tension discharged. "Desiring wealth, men have fashioned for thee this hymn, as a skilful workman a car; and thus they have disposed thee to confer happiness" (Rig Veda 1. 130. 6.). "Let my inspiriting hymn proceed to Vishnu, the dweller in the mountains, the wide-stepping, the vigorous, who alone traversed with three steps this wide, extended firmament (Rig. V. I. 154, 3). Such examples show in what light the Rishi-authors themselves regarded their spontaneous outbursts.

Their great number and vogue is due to the deep ignorance of the people coupled with their no less deep selfishness, which has allowed of their exploitation by the cunning among them. The huge edifice of superstition, fraud and evil-doing can only be brought low by a system of wide-spread education on rational lines.

The two most important and indeed typical Mantras of either kind are the Pranava, or Om; and the Savitri, or Gayatri.

The repetition of the former, all by itself, known as the Pranava-upasana, has come to be the privilege specially of the ascetics of the order of Shankaracharya; while with a good many others it is always conjoined with the Gayatri and other Mantras. This giving up, by some of the ascetic sects, of the repetition of the Gayatri, is not an innovation of Shankaracharya (1st half of the eighth century A. C.), but is much older. It is a relic of the times when its daily repetition had not become a fixed practice, and so it is scarcely accurate to say that it has been 'given up.' As the upanayana of the boy ushered him into the life of a student, so later in the Sutras a ceremony came into existence for the 'new birth' of a man as an ascetic, known as the Savitri-pravesha (Baudhayana Dharma Sutra II, X 14) 'entering the Savitri.' In the earliest days it was always a case of यदहरेव विरजेत् तदहरेव प्रव्रजेत् (जाबालोपनिषद्) *i.e.*, whenever a person felt the call of renunciation of a life of the spirit, he gave up the householder's life. He did not bother himself about being 'initiated' in any orthodox fashion into the life of the spirit. With him it was not a case of merely exchanging one set of rituals for another set. He simply threw off all his shackles and ordered his life as his spirit dictated and not as men or books prescribed.

To come now to the second Mantra, the Gayatri. The repetition of this, as a vidya, or upasana, or Diksha — discipline, worship, path — is universal among the three higher castes. All those who aspire to be recognised as Dwijas and to be included in one of the three Sub-divisions, also practise it. Latterly it has been taken up by non-Dwijas, and even by a number of Europeans, through the teachings of the Theosophical Society. This Mantra has a strange history extending back to the remotest antiquity of which we preserve any traces. It is a fragment of one of the many floating hymns which later were gathered and embodied in one ill-arranged and confused Samhita, which still later was split up into three for the convenience of the different priests, with a view to supplying each with the ritual manual for his own special duties. This particular verse can scarcely be less than six thousand years old, though the non-critical Hindu fondly cherishes the belief that it has existed from all eternity. By the time the floating hymns came to be gathered together for ritualistic purposes, their original bearings had been forgotten and lost, and they came to be utilised haphazard and irrespective of their meanings for different portions of sacrifices. It was the Brahmanas who started the practice of applying the ancient hymns of praise to particular sacramental acts regardless of the meanings or purposes of those Mantras. For the last 1000 years or more the full logical conclusion of this attitude has been rampant in the land, *viz.*, that the meanings of the Mantras do not matter at all, and that it is only in their sounds as they are uttered that their real efficacy lies. We have wandered far indeed from the days of the authors of those hymns.

In the Rig Veda this mantra is the tenth Rik of the sixty-second Sukta of the third Mandala. This third Mandala is made up wholly of the hymns composed by Vishvamitra and his pupils and descendants of the clan of the Kaushikas. This sixty-second Sukta unlike some others, is not a continuous composition, but a collection of miscellaneous invocations to Indra, Varuna, Brihaspati, Pusha, Savita, Soma, and so on. This shows clearly that even so early as the time of the compilation of the Rig Veda, the original context of the Mantras, brought together haphazard in it, was lost and only an imperfect remembrance of them kept floating in the memory of the people. And as it would have been a sacrilege to reject any, though a very large number must have been lost by then, they were all thrown together pell-mell to jostle along in the river of time. The tradition faithfully handed down ascribes it to the great Kshatriya king and Rishi Vishvamitra, the uncompromising rival of the no less powerful Brahmana teacher Vasishtha. In the Krishna Yajuh the Mantra is I. V. 64 and again IV. I. II. III. In the the Shukla Yajuh it is III, 35. one of the Mantras for the Agnihotra, again it occurs as XXII. 9, for inviting Savita to whom cakes are presented in the Aashvamedha ; and yet again as XXX. 2. *recited when about to bring up the victim in the Purushamedha.* (*vide* Shatapatha Brahmana II. III, 4, 39 and XIII. VI. 2. 9.). In the Sama it is II. XIII. 9 and is wholly unconnected with either what precedes or succeeds it. It occurs in all the three Vedas, because these are Mantra-manuals for the three kinds of priests who officiate at a sacrifice, and the mantra is intended to be used on different sacrificial occasions. Manu's attempt (II. 77) to deduce a special mystical holiness from this fact is mere mystification.

It is an invocation to Savita, one of the minor gods of the Vedic pantheon. He is pre-eminently the golden diety, described in the Rig Veda as golden-eyed, golden-handed, golden-tongued and so on. He is also called Asura, an old Vedic term, pre-eminently an adjective of Varuna, the greatest, or if not that, then certainly one of the greatest gods of the Vedas. He is sometimes identified with, and at other times differntiated, from Surya. His special functions were inspiration, generation, vivification, impulsion, as may be inferred from the principal meanings of the root *su* from which the term is derived.

Owing to the absence of the original context all attempts at an interpretation of the hymn, can only be tentative and merely philological. Endless are such interpretations, the climax of absurdity being reached by the Tripura Tapini Upanishad, which identifies it with the Panchadashi Mantra of the Tantrikas. It divides Bhargodevasyadhimahi as Bhargodevasya Dhi and Mahi and explains Dhi as Dharana, what is supported; and Mahi as Maha, great, hard, that is the Earth, and so on!!!

The two interpretations that seem to be most natural and free from sectarian twist are, (1) May we attain the great glory of the god Savita, who inspires our thoughts, or works. (2) We meditate on the supreme effulgence of the god Savita, that he may inspire our thought or works.

This Mantra in process of time came to be used for five distinct purposes. Two of these uses, namely in the Shrauta Sacrifices, 'and in the Upanayana Diksha, have been briefly adverted to above. It forms the opening, in all Soma sacrifices, of the Vaishvadeva Shastra or the evening libation, except on the Rathantara days of the Dvadashaha sacrifice (Aitarya Brahmana IV. V. 29. 32, and V. i- 2. 5. etc.). Its use in the Shankhayana Shrauta Sutra, leaves no room for lexicon and grammar, the meaning is totally ignored and each of its three feet are used as separate Mantras—" Tat saviturvarenyam, may Bhuh, Vak increase for me, Svaha; 'Bhargodevasya dhimahi, may Bhuvah, Prana increase for me, Svaha; 'Dhiyo yo nah prachodayat, may all that is named Svar increase for me, Svaha'.........thus in the Anvaharyapachana '", *i.e.*, in the ritual of cooking the sacrificial viands in the Dakshinagni (II. 10. 2.). Another example of a similar use of the Gayatri is provided by the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (VI. III).

In the Vedic ritual a Diksha, initiation, is viewed as a process of gestation and a birth (Ait. Bra. I. i. 3.), and this mantra invokes the God Savita, the god of generation *par excellence.* It therefore came naturally to be imparted to the 're-born' novice after the preliminaries of the Upanayana ceremony, consecrated the student and made him fit to receive it. In the Shatapatha Brahmana (XI. V. 4. 12) an ancient Gatha is quoted which means " by laying his right hand on the pupil, the teacher becomes pregnant with him: in the third night he is born as a Brahmana with the Savita." Be it noted here, that there is no mention of the novice being born as a Kshatriya or a Vaishya. This Savitri mantra in the earliest days was imparted to the pupil one year after the upanayana ceremonial; thus keeping up the fiction of a new birth; later the intervening time began to dwindle to six months, to twenty-four days, to three days, till now finally it has disappeared altogether.

The third use of the Gayatri is as a means of wiping off of sins, Prayaschitta. Gautama prescribes that " he who unintentionally speaks to an outcaste sinner shall stand, during one night, reciting the Savitri; but if he intentionally does so, for three days " (*Dh. Su.* XX. 8.9.). According to Vasishtha, the wife is purified of the sin of adultery by being immersed in water while her husband offers eight hundred burnt oblations with the Savitri and Shiras (*Dh. Su.* XXI. 8.). One of the Smritis lays down another purification (as well as test) for the erring wife. It is simply this. She is to be kept in a separate place, under rather stringent conditions of achara till her menses commence. Evidently this was meant to be a rational way of getting over the inevitable dispute about the fathership of the child if the woman happened to become pregnant. On this question of vital importance to every community and in an especial degree to us Hindus, the reader should consult the eminently sensible Devala Smriti. Apastamba makes of Gayatri repetition a general purificatory ceremony. One thousand repetitions free the person from all sins (Dh. Su. 1. 9. 26. 4.). The expiatory use of the Mantra is most probably due to the belief that the uttering of the verse brings about a 're-birth', and so the man restarts life with so to say a clean slate, all that had happened before having been wiped off. The sins of the 'old' body were shed with the 'old' body.

The fourth use of the verse is as chief part of the morning and evening prayers in the Sandhya-upasana. The word Sandhya being a derivative from Sandhi, joining, *i.e.*, the time of twilight, when day and night join. This is known as the Gayatri-japa, repetition of the Mantra at least ten times at each such performance is an indispensable adjunct of the morning and evening prayers. The Vedic form of the Sandhya was a very simple one, far different both in spirit and method, from its much later Tantric and Puranic elaborate and complex development, which has smothered it in an enormous envelope of ritual. The earliest form was merely the offering of Arghyam, offering of water to a guest as a sign of welcoming him. This offering of water was done by the performer pouring out water from his joined palms and turning round himself, (Atma pradakshina), for he could not very well go round the Sun as he would round a human guest, and saying that Aditya is Brahma (Asavadityo-Brahma). This water was also made to subserve another and far more important purpose than of mere welcome, namely that of a weapon thrown against the enemies of the 'guest' Sun,—the demons of darkness, who try to bar his way. Anthropological investigations have shown that all over the world primitive man regards the on-coming of night as a dreadful calamity, for it swallows up the Sun, and he in various ways tries to help the Sun to overcome his enemies in his ever-renewed fight, and emerge triumphant every morning. The earliest Hindu was not above this belief—he took up water in the hollow of his joined palms, muttered the Gayatri over it and then threw it, each drop by the vitalising power of the Mantra, hitting the demons of darkness with the force of a thunderbolt and killing them, thus clearing the path of the Sun. "The Rakshasas, formerly, performed severe tapas. Prajapati on this asked them what they wanted. They said, 'we want to fight the Sun'. Prajapati told them, 'Fight.' The Rakshasas, rising thence, fight the Sun till he sets. These Rakshasas are subdued by the water over which the Gayatri has been uttered. This water becomes a thunderbolt, and throws the Rakshasas in the island of the Mandehas, called Aruna" (Taittiriya Aranyaka II. ii.)

"Brahmavadis say, 'why do the Brahmanas do the evening worship of the Sandhya *sitting*? Why, in the morning, *standing*? What is Sandhya? What is the season for Sandhya? What constitutes the nature of Sandhya? 'The Devas and the Asuras fought. The Asuras pursued the Sun. The Sun was afraid. His heart sank. He ran to Prajapati. Prajapati 'saw' on his behalf this magical remedy, *i. e.*, Ritam, Satyam, Brahma, Om, the three-footed Gayatri, and the Brahmamukham. The first three are, most likely, names of mantras which have not been identified so far. The last is the Gayatri preceded by the words Om Bhuh, Bhuvah, Svah known as the three vyahritis. Hence Brahmanas do the Sandhya-worship at the meeting of day and night. This is its season. This is Sandhya. This is the essence of Sandhya. If one does it sitting in the evening, he gains the place of heroes. If he performs the ceremony of pouring water, the drops become thunderbolts. These destroy the Asuras. Thence the Devas became victors. If one knows this, his enemies become defeated of themselves (Shadvimshati Brahmana IV, V)." It will be noticed that the 'reason' for doing Sandhya *standing* in the morning has not been given.

This fourth use has become much widened in scope since its early manifestations. For centuries now, it has been used as a weapon for warding off all sorts of threatened supernormal dangers, and as a protective armour against such supernormal evils. As soon as a person feels frightened over something uncanny, he begins forthwith to mutter the Gayatri. If he is stricken down by such illnesses, which are ascribed to ghostly influences, a number of Brahmanas are commissioned to repeat the Mantra a stated number of times, to perform, in short, what is known as Gayatri-purashcharana.

The fifth and latest use of the Gayatri is its daily morning and evening repetition, at least ten times by itself, without any other ceremonial. This Gayatri-japa is now become such an indispensable feature of the Sandhyas, that in the pressure of modern life, most people are content merely with its repetition, and their orthodox conscience is satisfied even when dropping out all the other portions of the ritual. Neither do they observe the 'season.' Anytime is good enough. Many have also given up the evening Sandhya. Apparently this practice of systematic Gayatri-japa as an integral part of the Sandhya rite came into vogue sometime about the Sutra period and earlier than the present Manu-smriti. The Dharma Sutra of Baudhayana prescribes an elaborate Sandhya ritual, but this Sutra too has not escaped the reviser's hands, as Buhler has shown conclusively. But both in the Sutras and in Manu the point of view seems to have been that of a purificatory process primarily, and only secondarily that of an injunction; the muttering of the mantra is supposed to help to balance one's Karmic ledger from day to day; it nullifies the action of the previous day's sins and gives one, each day a fresh start in the march to Swarga unhampered by a load of evil.

Perhaps also about this time the feeling arose that by the daily utterance of Gayatri the duty of studying the Vedas, Swadhyaya, was satisfied. For was not the Gayatri the mother of the Vedas? With such a simple solution the heavy burden of Vedic studies was beautifully simplified for the vast majority of Brahmanas, who could not or would not devote their time to such studies. With the increasing influence of the Tantras, a great elaboration of the simple Vedic Sandhya has taken place, mid-day prayers have also been instituted and meditations on the three forms of the Gayatri-devi added, as also on the golden Narayana whose dwelling is the Sun and with whom the worshipper is taught to indentify himself in the verses of the Ishopanishad.

The Gayatri which began as a favourite Vedic metre, got identified, fairly early, with the goddess Vak, and thence the transition to its being regarded as the mother of all the Vedas became inevitable. It became one of the most important vidyas, disciplines, described in the Chandogya, where are described a great many other disciplines, vidyas, also, but the whole subject of these various vidyas is so obscure that little can be made out of it. The Brihadaranyaka also gives a description of this vidya as practised among its followers, but it too is no clearer than the Chandogya on the point, the whole treatment being on mystic lines. No light is to be had from the Bhashyas of Shankaracharya, who has only made the darkness deeper.

Within the last two thousand years or so the industry of manufacturing Mantras has been worked diligently. All sorts of Mantras for every imaginable purpose have been produced. By the simple process of ringing changes on a few words of the old Gayatri, even a great many new Gayatris have been created. To say nothing of the gods and goddesses, each one of whom has been provided by its sectarian worshippers with an approriate Gayatri, even Nandi the bull, Garuda the eagle, Hanuman the monkey, and Kama the lust-god, Cupid, have been provided with one apiece. As an interesting example I give here the one created for the last: "Om Kama devaya vidmahe, pushpabanaya dhimahi, tannonangah prachodayat, Om." There is no limit to such manufacture; and the products form the stock-in-trade of many a wandering Sadhu, Brahmana or non-Brahmana, who roams the country initiating credulous disciples in these new-fangled Mantras, further stunting their minds thereby and making his living by the fees received from them.

Coming back to the original verse, the Gayatri,— तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गोदेवस्य धीमहि धियो योनः प्रचोदयात् — it is so called because it is composed in that metre and came to be regarded as the type of it. The metre is made up of three feet containing eight syllables each; but the first foot of this Mantra has only seven syllables; the mistake of the lame metre is however got over by reading वरेण्यं as वरेणि अं (*varenyam* as *vareni am.*) The method of correcting the metre by counting Om as a part of the verse is a later device due to ignorance. A fourth foot—Parorajase savadom—is also given in the Chandogya (III. 12. 5.) and the Brihadaranyaka (V. XIV. 7.); but what this means is impossible to make out.

The history of this solitary verse floating down the stream of time since somewhere about six thousand years ago—the inspired composition of a Kshatriya who was at deadly feud with the Brahmanas headed by Vasishtha has a deep lesson to teach to all those whose vision is not clouded by bigotry and cramping prejudices. That it has completely superseded the Gayatri of his bitter opponent—for he too had composed verses invoking the god Savita—and has become the Mantra par excellence of every Dwija, is a phenomenon worth dwelling upon for a moment. The lesson of such a victory should not be allowed to be forgotten. In those far off times whose memory even has become a dream, there existed a a mighty Rishi named Vasishtha. He was the embodiment of all that was holy and learned, a very pillar of orthodoxy, the unrivalled champion of the Brahmanas, the sturdy upholder of the *status quo*; the enemy of all innovation. Within his orbit of influence appeared the figure of another man equally great and holy if not greater and wiser. It was the figure of the mighty King and Rishi Vishvamitra—the upholder of freedom and liberty, the champion of the down-trodden non-Brahmanas. Great were the battles waged between the two. Ultimately victory remained with the leader of the progressives and the policy of exclusion and of selfish seclusion and of isolation was trampled down for the time being. We dimly hear the clang of the furious fights as we read these old-world documents and rejoice to learn that even in those days. liberalism won and the nation expanded and the champion of dark conservatism was forced to acknowledge Visvamitra the outsider, as one of his own kith and kin. This old-world story is a type of the eternal duel which is being waged unceasingly between the staunch supporters of a narrow and bigoted orthodoxy and those who believe in throwing wide-open the gates of the Hall of Brotherhood and of Love. This battle is never won once for all time, the forces of darkness are ever vigilant and their hordes swallow up liberty as soon as there is any slackening of efforts. The fettering influences of selfish sacerdotalism have ever to be watched and their insidious progress choked each time it is born, as even those of capitalism and landlordism.

I have not dwelt here upon the inspirational side of the uses of the Gayatri and of the Pranava, because they are too well-known, when rightly utilised, to need more than a passing mention. Even Western Psychology is beginning to realise the truth of some of our Yoga-teachings and how the mere repetition of one's own name even, for instance, helps to still the restlessness of the mind and the body and throw one into a hypnosis releasing the soul from its physical bondage. People who have honestly tried genuine Yoga have much to say about states of consciousnesses thus attained. These processes are becoming dimly known to the West, but unfortunately India happens to be full of spurious Yogis, who help only to throw discredit upon the science and produce disbelief in the minds of all intelligent enquirers after truth.

This plain simple prayer to the Sun-god to inspire the heart, lame of metre, neither grandiose in language, nor overflowing with sublimity of thought, has all the same, wound itself round our hearts inextricably. Its powers of fascination remain undiminished. It has been the source of our highest aspirations. It has helped us, as no other Mantra has ever done, to surmount vices, and to climb painfully the ladder of being, from the level of savagery to the heights of supreme altruism and self-abnegation, to reaches of thought and of ethics undreamt of by the ordinary mortal. Resounding in the sacred silence of the Akasha of the heart, it has helped numberless generations to reach the regions "where the Sun does not shine, nor the Moon, nor the Stars, nor yet these lightnings, much less this fire, where the knots of the heart have been broken, and where immortality, the birth-right of every human being is realised."*

UPASANA

We have seen that the Vedic dikshas, beginning with the upanayana, and of which there are a very large number, consist in the initiation of the disciple by the teacher into words and rites of power, *i.e.*, magical incantations, in short. For initiation into the Magic of the Atharva Veda the upanayana was not enough. Another separate initiation was required (*vide* Vaitana Sutra I. i. 5.) These dikshas came gradually to be replaced in the Upanishad period by the many vidyas, initiations into 'knowledges', disciplines. These also in time got superseded by upasanas, worshipful supplications of the many gods and goddesses. We see running throughout the one thread of desire to get into touch with the noumenon behind the world-phenomenon, to master its secret and control it, instead of being controlled by it. There is no jerk, no sudden revolutionary break with the past; it is all orderly natural evolution. The political condition of India between 800 A. D. and 1700 A. D.,—with its utter lawlessness, oppression and fanatical religious persecution, the forcible conversion of millions of Hindus to Islam, the systematic destruction of priceless libraries and temples both Hindu and Buddhist and the murders of their custodians — gave a vigorous impetus to this evolution. The helpless terror-stricken people turned in their sad plight to a religion of faith, of love, of humble worship.

---

* For further details see P. T. Srinivas Iyengar's "The Gayatri" printed by Srinivasa Varadachari & Co, Madras. Price 6 As.

We see then that upasana is that peculiar kind of intense and purposive worship by which the worshipper tries to get into touch with the object of his worship —a Deva or a Devi—and which finally ends by his identifying himself with the object of the worship and merging his consciousness into that of the god or goddess. It often degenerates into unreflecting and intolerant Bhakti for some one specialised form of the Godhead, leading the Bhakta into raising up a forbidding Chinese wall between himself and others who do not follow his favourite cult. It not unoften takes on grotesque and even repellent forms as when the male worshippers take on the Nayika or Sakhi bhava towards the object of their worship, and regard themselves as "The Lord's Mistresses" masculine 'brides of Christ', don woman's garb and play many such other outrageous pranks—even to the extent of shamming menstruation and undergoing the three days segregation—which culminate in hysteria and immorality, as is too often the case amongst the intense Krishna worshippers of the Vallabha and Chaitanya sects. All such practices have to be recognised as having their true roots in feelings of eroticism and of perverted sexuality developed by immoderate indulgence in the emotion of Bhakti unchecked by the balancing force of Jnana, wisdom. In the very oldest days of Hinduism of which traces can be found now, there were neither temples nor images. These were evolved much later when the higher ethic of a better taught generation would have nothing to do with the fierce and bloody Yajnas—often indecent to the point of filthiness and barbarity—and wanted a more humane ritual and gods on whom love could be lavished instead of beings of great prowess who were to be worshipped in awe, with dread in the poor worshipper's heart. The sacrifices disappeared under the gentle Dharma of Mahavira and Gautama and a pompous ritual of Bhakti grew up to fill the vacant space.

The "heart" of Vedic Yajna was the offering of meat and drink to the various gods by pouring it into the fire which was taken to be their mouth. The ceremonial was complex because the Rishis were constantly guarding themselves against any evil by endless uttering of propitiatory Mantras, lest by some mischance things may go wrong and harm befall them. So in their fear they went on multiplying rituals. They may also have done this for love of complexity and a desire to keep out "interlopers." Trees, knives, stones, grass, in short everything had to be propitiated before they dared to handle it for their purposes. Even the ground had to be sanctified by the dragging round it of a live frog till it was dead. Later, in the ages that composed the Upanishads, the Vidyas began to take the place of the sacrifices, but with the thinking portion, the elect of the community only. These teachings were a close preserve of the higher classes from which the masses were rigidly excluded. These Vidyas were "meditations," chiefly on cosmogony and on the Atma. Still later came the Agamas. They came soon after the decline of the protestant religions of the Jina and the Buddha, whose philosophy was too dry for the ordinary folk and who had no rituals which these common people could substitute in place of the destroyed Vedic ritual.

These Agamas started the practice of muttering mantras sacred to various Devas and Devis of a post-Vedic age and prescribed methods of meditation and worship for the purpose of gaining their favour. These earlier Agamas were followed by others in which the modern temple ritual was elaborated and the many debased and debasing forms of Shiva, Vishnu and Shakti worship were established. The ugly images of Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra, the Phallus (the more realistic in its representation the farther we go back to its beginnings, and still so in remote corners of India) which is worshipped as Mahadeva, (the famous Narmadeshwaras of various colors are not stone. They are petrified wood—similar to stone-coal—from prehistoric submerged forests and are found at the source of the river Narmada. After being cut into shape and ground and polished are sold for worship), the Shalagrama, (which is generally taken to be a stone pebble but is really a fossil shell of some sea creature of long ages ago found in the bed of the river Gandak in Nepal, and) which is worshipped as a symbolic representation of Vishnu, the dreaded hideous goddess Kali—these are perhaps all legacies from very primitive times and very low cultures, bodily transferred and assimilated into Hinduism, though later on beautiful poetic conceits have been woven round them. For the aborigines would not give them up, and so while the Aryans coalesced with them, their gods also prudently coalesced with the aboriginal gods, but only insisted on giving them a less unbecoming inner meaning. Even so the very simple religion of the Christ has taken up all the Jewish cosmogony and angels and devils.

In modern practice generally every Hindu man and woman of all the four castes is given what is called a Diksha—an initiation—after he has come to years of discretion. It consists in the family Guru giving an Ishta-devata—or especial tutelary deity—and his mantra. These are selected according to well established astrological rules in each case, and the Upasaka is not to disclose them even to her husband or to his wife. They remain a dead secret between the person and the designing Guru, making the latter a supreme factor even in such intimate and holy relations of life as that of husband and wife or parent and child. The parallel of the Roman Catholic confessors and Jesuits will occur to the reader. The mantra is always a Tantric one and so is the god, who has to be propitiated thenceforward every day by the person so initiated.

Some of the chief features of an Upasana are *(a)* Pranayama, regulation of breath, *(b)* Japa, repetitions of the mantra and *(c)* Dhyana, meditation on the particular Deva, his qualities and appearance as described in the books on Tantra. In modern India, as against the old Vedic practice., every act, religious or secular, is begun by an invocation of the blood-colored, pot-bellied, four-handed, elephant-headed and rat-mounted Ganesha. Attempts are often made to turn this ludicrous representation into a symbolic one and read allegorical meanings where none exist. So late a work as the Yajnyavalkya-smriti (*circa* 200 A.C.) mentions him not as one of the beneficent gods, but as a maleficent demon (see I. 270, 289, 293). He brings trouble if not timely propitiated. He is unknown to Valmiki. Like many another member of the modern pantheon, he is a non-Aryan deity and was smuggled in, and the Rig-Veda hymn (II. XXIII. i.) गणानां त्वा गणपतिं हवामहे which was originally addressed to Brihaspati, was conveniently misunderstood to apply to him. By a similar misinterpretation the hymns to the Vedic Rudras have been transferred to the Puranic Mahadeva.

GANESHA

A digression on Ganesha may be permitted here. By the time that the Yajnyavalkya Smriti was put together the memory of the priest custodians of Hindu lore had begun to get confused over this god or rather Evil Spirit. A reference to the Manava Grihya Sutra 2. 14., (ed. by Dr. F. Knauer. St. Petersberg) shows this very clearly. According to that work this personage is not a unitary god, but is four separate gods, namely (1) शलकटंकट, (2) कूष्माण्ड राजपुत्र, (3) अजास्मित, and, (4) देवयजन. Each of these obsess human beings and make them behave in queer ways and cause them troubles innumerable.

The Sutra prescribes the ritual for exorcising these malignant demons and appeasing their anger. Raw flesh, fish and alcoholic liquors are offered to them where cross-roads meet. In short there is no difference between the *Utara* magic as widely practised all over India to-day and this ceremonial. These demons have evidently been absorbed by Hinduism from the ocean of non-Vedic cults surrounding it about the time of the Sutra period. By the time of the Yajnyavalkya smriti (I. 271) the four had coalesced into one, but with six different names namely (1) शाल, (2) कटंकट, (3) कूष्माण्ड, (4) राजपुत्र, (5) मित and (6) सम्मित. It will be seen that the first four are simply the result of splitting up the first two of the Manava Grihya Sutra into four, and the fifth and the sixth are modifications of the third, while the fourth has been completely forgotten. About the time of the Sutra period the early definiteness about the eleven Rudras and the four Vinayakas began to get confused, and when the eleven Rudras coalesced into a single Mahadeva, the four Vinayakas also evolved into a single Ganapati and became the son of Mahadeva and Parvati. The godling through all his evolutions has however persisted in his original character of being an imp of mischief; though the intense malice of the mischief has given place to playfulness, so that propitiation is easily made now.

As he is the obstructor of all good deeds and intentions—the Vighna-Karaka—he is invoked at the beginning of every work. Hysteria and milder forms of lunacy were treated as obsessions by one of the four Vinayakas. To make of such a devilish creature a God of learning and wisdom is a most perplexing problem in the psychology of human beliefs. It must have been a very mordant humour which has endowed him with an elephant's head, a most gluttonous appetite and its consequence an enormous belly; and, to complete the ridiculous picture, gives him as his mount a tiny mouse one of the very worst enemies of humanity. Was this a delicate way of conveying that it was foolish to look for learning where mice, the proverbial enemies of books, were stabled most honourably!

The worshippers of Ganesha are divided into six sub-sects, and some of these follow the Vamamarga methods of the Shakti-worshippers, and behave a shade worse than these in their filthiness for their god is the presiding deity of the organ of excretion. Homo-sexuality and the eating of ordure as amongst the Kapalikas, the aghora-panthis, (and the Black-magic sects of Europe, mentioned in Max Nordau's *Degeneration*) is the natural sequal to this hideous 'worship'. The genesis of such unnatural practices—for they are not confined to this particular sect or to India alone—has been found in a majority of cases to be due to the hook-worm, which burrowing through the skin causes internal bleeding especially in the duodenum destroying energy and vitality, and producing degeneracy and crime. Religion is only a mask for covering up these filthy practices. Dr. Bozzolo of Turin has discovered that the drug Thymol followed by Epsom Salts expels the worms and cures the sufferer—(*vide* Sir H. H. Johnston " The Negro in the New World.")

The Vama-marga image is known as Uchhishta-Gaṇapati a naked Devi is a part of the image and his proboscis plays over her body. The *Mantra-Maharnava* the *Uttara-Kamikagama* and other Tantra works describe the appearance and the worship from which lithic images have been prepared. (*vide* T. A. Gopinatha Rao " Elements of Hindu Iconography.")

The cause-seeking human mind cannot always remain dormant and at times makes desperate efforts at rationalising. To one such attempt in the *Suprabhedagama*, we owe a most astounding " explanation." When questioned by his highly precocious son about his uncouth body half man and half animal, the ' Great God ' Mahadeva replied that while he was roaming the Himalayas in the company of his mother Parvati, they saw elephants pairing and a desire entered into their hearts to take on elephant shapes and as he was conceived while they were in elephant shapes, the son was born with his peculiar body !!!

Similar is the story of the patron saints of the Hindu physicians—the Ashvinikumaras—the two horse-headed sons of the Sun. Surya's wife, unable to bear the effulgence of the God ran away from him and hid herself in the form of a mare on the

Earth—the god in his daily round detected her and deserting his post, came over, taking on the form of a stallion, the result of the union was the two primeval physicians. Of course, there are allegorical explanations also, due to a later feeling that such an elaborately artificial myth could not be due to mere primitive savage instinct. They think that *ashva*, *ashvi* etc., mean 'the body with the *sense-organs* which run to their objects.'

The name of Surya's wife is Samjna, which plainly means consciousness. Surya's becoming an *ashva* means the *prana*-energy element entering into the physical vehicle of the consciousness. The two, 'physicians' born from that union are *Shvasa* and *prashavasa*, the outgoing and ingoing breaths, or the breaths of the right and the left nostrils as some would have it—*the regulation* of which breaths is a prime means of curing many diseases and postponing old age. This is mentioned here as an example to show to the reader how good and evil, gross deception and crass supersition as also wisdom, are mixed together in Hinduism as elsewhere.

All this illustrates once again the fact, often deliberately ignored, that Hinduism has been steadily changing its character from age to age and that to select some one time and its practices and call it Sanatana, eternal, is but a pious fraud. It is to-day no longer what it was when the Vedic Rishis lived and chanted their songs, nor is it to-day what it was when these rapidly disappearing songs were collected together and petrified into Samhitas. To-day it is an agglomeration of everything under heaven and earth, from the acutest philosophy to the most barbarous fetish worship ; all shades of the highest ideals coupled with the most degrading practices are enfolded in its all-embracing creeds.

MARRIAGE

Having dealt with the sacrament of upanayana and seen how the Vedic Dikshas evolved into the Upanishadic Vidyas and these again into the Puranic and Tantric upasanas, we shall now go into the question of the marriage sacrament.

This is the sole sacrament that is allowed to women, and this has been so since at least the third century B.C. Their degradation from a footing of equal comradeship with the husband सहधर्मिणी, as depicted in the Samhitas began as early as the days of the Brahmanas ; though protests were not wanting against such degradation to the status of the Shudra. Harita (XXI. 20) says :—

न शूद्रसमाः स्त्रियाः । नहि शूद्र योनौ ब्राह्मण क्षत्रिय वैश्याः जायन्ते । तस्माच्छंदसा स्त्रियः संस्कार्याः ।

" Women, of the higher castes are not of Shudra status. From a Shudra womb, Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas cannot be born. Therefore they should be passed through the Vedic sacraments." That all the sacraments were performed for women as for men, is clearly proved by Manu's verse.

पुरा कल्पेषु नारीणां मौंजी बन्धनमिष्यते ।
अध्यापनंच वेदानां सावित्री वचनं तथा ॥

But by this time they had been reduced to the level of Shudras and all Vedic rites were forbidden them. He says that marriage is the only sacrament permitted to them, and he goes on to show the correspondences between it and the upanayana, namely, the residence with the teacher is replaced by the service of the husband, and the tending of the sacrificial fire, by the household duties.

वैवाहिको विधिः स्त्रीणां संस्कारो वैदिकः स्मृतः ।
पतिसेवा गुरौवासः गृहार्थोऽग्नि परिक्रिया ॥

From this the next fatal step of baby marriage was a foregone logical conclusion. If the Upanayana for the boy was equal to the Vivaha for the girl, then eight years which was the proper age for the former was also the proper age for the latter. Further, as upanayana for a Brahmana might be rightfully performed in his fifth year, surely a girl too could be properly married in her fifth year. Perverse priestly ingenuity could scarcely show a more shining example of its far reaching wisdom, than such exegesis. The coping stone of all this is the pronouncement of Manu.

पिता रक्षति कौमारे भर्ता रक्षति यौवने ।
पुत्रो रक्षति वार्धक्ये न स्त्री स्वातंत्र्यमर्हति ॥

A woman is never to be allowed independence, she is always to be kept in *status pupillari*. Before marriage, she is under the *manus* of her father, or the nearest male relative in case of his demise; after marriage, under that of her husband, and after his demise, if she survives him, under that of her sons, or in their absence of her late husband's nearest relatives. Yet, at the same time there could be nothing better than some of the admonitions of Manu as to how women should be treated and what should be the mutual relations of wife and husband.

> यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवताः ।
> यत्रैतास्तु न पूज्यन्ते सर्वास्तत्राऽफलाः क्रियाः ॥
> शोचन्ति जामयो यत्र विनश्यत्याशु तत्कुलम् ।
> न शोचन्ति तु यत्रैता वर्धते तद्धि सर्वदा ॥
> सन्तुष्टो भार्यया भर्ता भर्त्रा भार्या तथैवच ।
> यस्मिन्नेव कुलेनित्यं कल्याणं तत्र वै ध्रुवम् ॥

"Where the woman are treated worshipfully, there dwell the gods; where they are not so treated, in those homes religious actions bring no good fruit. That household perishes very quickly where the women grieve; while the househeld where they are happy prospers exceedingly. Where the husband is pleased with his wife, and the wife with her husband, there does happiness and prosperity dwell". We can thus see plainly that two distinct streams of thought are running through Manu, one liberal, humanitarian, equitable, a reminiscence of the Mantra period; and the other illiberal, inhuman, inequitable, of a later degenerate day, when the Medieval darkness of an untimely and unhealthy (instead of healthy) asceticism, on the one side, and the gloom of constant wars, on the other, had begun to envelope fair India in their gruesome embrace. A few quotations from the Samhitas will help to drive home the points sought to be proved that woman's position in the earliest days was far different from that of the Sutra and the Smriti period.

The Saptapadi Mantra runs—

सखा सप्तपदा भव,—(आपस्तम्ब मन्त्रपाठ १-३-१४)

" With seven steps become (my) friend."

सखायौ सप्तपदा बभूव । सख्यं ते गमेयं । सख्यात्ते मायोषं ।
सख्यान्मे मायोष्ठाः—(हिरण्यकेशीय गृ. सू. १-२९-२)

" With seven steps, we have become friends; may I attain to friendship with thee; may I not be separated from thy friendship; mayest thou not be separated from my friendship.

सम यात्र संकल्यावहै । संप्रियौरोचिष्णू सुमनस्य मानौ ।
इषमूर्ज मभि संवसानौ । संनौमनां सि संव्रता ।
समुचित्तान्याकरम् ॥—(आपस्तम्बमंत्रपाठ १-३-१४)

" Let us combine and harmonise together, dear to each other, brilliant, affectionately disposed, abiding in one place for food and vigour; together have we brought our minds our ordinances and our thoughts." It will be seen that throughout this verse, which is an indispensable part of every marriage ceremony, the stress laid is on *equality* and *friendship*. Then again

संराज्ञी श्वशुरं भव, संराज्ञी श्वश्रुवांभव, ननान्दरि संराज्ञी भव, संराज्ञी अधिदेवृषु ।

" Do thou rule as a queen thy father-in-law and thy mother-in-law, thy husband's sisters and thy brothers-in-law." The next two quotations show the important part she took in the sacrificial rites.

गृहानाच्छ गृहपत्नी यथाऽसो । वशिनीत्वं विदथमावदासि ॥ इह प्रियं प्रजया ते समृध्यतामस्मिन् गृहे गार्हपत्याय जागृहि । एनापत्या तन्वं संसृजस्वाथा जीव्री विदथमावदासि ॥——(ऋगवेद १०-२८-२६)

" Go to the house to be the household's mistress and speak as lady to thy gathered people. Happy be thou and prosper with thy childern here: be vigilant to rule thy household in this home. Closely unite thy body with this man, thy lord. So shall ye full of years, address your company." (*Griffith*).

But it is neither possible nor even desirable to attempt a resuscitation of the manners of the Vedic days. What is wanted is that our present day customs with regard to marriage should be freed from their trammels of centuries and be brought into harmony with the ideas and needs of modern times.

Marriage with us is not a question to be settled for one-self by one-self as in the West. With us, in every caste, it is a matter of prime responsibility for the parents. It is their business to see that every girl and every son also is suitably married.

It is the ceremony that marks the end of the student stage and the beginning of the life of the world. The proper age for this Samskara is, as Vagbhata, Sushruta, and other medical authorities state, from the twenty-first years upwards for a youth, and for a girl from the seventeenth year upwards.

ऊनषोडश वर्षायामप्राप्तः पंचविंशतिम् ।
यद्याधत्ते पुमानार्भः कुक्षिस्थः सविपद्यते ॥
जातो वा न चिरंजीवेत् जीवेद्वा दुर्बलेन्द्रियः ।
तस्मादत्यन्त बालायां गर्भाधानं नकारयेत् (सुश्रुत)
पूर्णषोडशवर्षा स्त्री पूर्णविंशेन संगता (वाग्भट)

It will be seen that there is a universal consensus of opinion that the wife should be younger than the husband by from four to eight years. Manu's injunction that a man of thirty is to wed a girl of twelve, and one of twenty-four a girl of eight—

त्रिंशद्वर्षोद्वहेत्कन्यां हृद्यां द्वादश वार्षिकीम् ।
चतुर्विंशाष्ट वर्षां वा धर्मेण त्वरितो यदि ॥

is an atrocious outrage on humanity. One can only hope that this hideous teaching is due to his latter-day revisers, most probably the ancient reading was द्विदश (twice ten) and not द्वादश (twelve), nor अष्ट (eight) but द्व्यष्ट (twice eight). Similar tamperings with other texts are not unknown to Hinduism. The late professor Max Muller discovered one such in the Vedic text which had been made to bolster up the awful custom of Sati. The true reading अग्रे (forward) had been changed into अग्ने (fire). Western medical science because of anatomical reasons is also beginning to teach, that ordinarily the wife should be a few inches shorter also than her husband.

If the marriage is to be a happy one the disparities, whether in physique, in age, in emotional or intellectual development should not be great, otherwise dis-harmony and consequent unhappiness are sure to result. Manu's rule of marriage, that a man of thirty to marry a girl of twelve and one of twenty-four to marry a girl of eight, stands condemned from every point of view, except the theological. Unfortunately this sensible medical view is wholly ignored and motherhood forced on immature young girls by the overwhelming power of custom throughout the country. It may be asked why this is so, even when the frightful evils of such parentage are recognised, why no stop is put to them? The real but unexpressed reason, one which would even be denied, lies in the deepseated mistrust of woman and the greater mistrust of men. Obviously, all the Smritis from Manu downwards and all the Puranas decry the putting of trust in such a frail weak vessel as a woman. They omit to explain "weak" as weak to protect herself against the lasciviousness of masculine knaves. So with almost a pathological exaggeration in their views about the observance of chastity, they have ignored every other consideration and doomed the womankind of India to life-long ill-health and misery and shortened life, and therefore, the mankind also to the same as their progeny.

The Agnihotra ceremonial may be said to have risen out of this Saṁskara. The fire kindled at the marriage altar was not allowed to die out, but was carried home in the front of the returning marriage procession—a practice which would now be utterly condemned and has been given up wholly—and was installed in the home with befitting ceremony, and daily oblations were offered into it morning and evening by the husband and wife acting together till death, when that fire was used to light the funeral pyre. This ritual shows that the Rishis did not contemplate joint-families, but favoured the setting up of separate households by every married couple. This practice of sedulously preserving a fire dates probably from those prehistoric times when the people had no knowledge of the means of making a fire, but depended upon jungle fires, the fire-drill being a later invention and lucifer matches quite unknown. The method still in use among the Parsis when starting a new 'firehouse', 'agiari', or when the fire at an old one goes out, throws a flood of light on the method. The fire is collected from neighbouring fires of various kinds and from some dry old tree in a jungle, set ablaze by lightning, and then strained seven times to purify it, by holding seven sieves one above the other, containing seven different and prescribed substances, which catch fire one after the other. The last fire is then said to be pure and is installed with ceremonies in the 'fire houses'; agnihotra-shalas.

All the books describe eight forms of marriage; some of these are so repugnant to modern ideas, that they would land a person in jail, if he practised them. The most approved of these, and the most current in these days, is the 'Brahma.' In this form of marriage there should be no bartering of either the bride or the bridegroom for money or its equivalent in kind. Unfortunately there is a distinct tendency towards a sordid money-bargaining now invading this, the purest form of marriage.

It may as well be pointed out here that polygamy is an utterly immoral and irreligious practice, and on no account to be countenanced; though this practice was common in ancient India. In those old days this had its uses in as much as it helped in the breaking down of the barriers between the Aryan and the Non-Aryan. So long as a man is allowed only one wife, it is only natural that he should choose one from women of his own 'colour;' when however he is allowed greater liberty he exercises a wider choice. In the absence of polygamy the antipathy of colour would lead to the most undesirable forms of slavery. To counteract such race and colour prejudice Napoleon advocated the legalisation of polygamy when his famous law codes were being drafted. (*Vide* Cambridge Modern History Vol. on Napoleon). The later Hindu law on this point of polygamy is very clear; the first marriage alone is regarded as a sacrament, the later ones, even when the first wife is dead, are not recognised as a Sanskara which is, by its very nature, obligatory, while subsequent marriages, even though allowable in certain cases, are at best only Kamya, matters of option and 'desire.' Of such Kamya marriages also the laws do not allow of more than one—as the only ground for permission lies in the necessity of the presence of the Yajamana-patni at certain sacrifices. The Aitareya Brahmana (Vol. I. pp. 176-177 Vol. II pps. 456-457 Haug's ed.) deals with this question known as विधुर विधान Hence it is clear that the indulging in a plurality of wives, who are married only through 'desire' and not for Dharma, and who are definitely prohibited from joining their husband in the performance of Vedic rites, is not allowed under all circumstances. (*Vide* Manu IX 77-83). It is a well-recognised custom that in invitations for दम्पतिपूजन no Brahmana, who has committed bigamy is invited, nor is a woman who has co-wives or is her husband's second wife allowed to hold the अन्त:पट the cloth held over the bride and bridegroom at the marriage ritual. Two curious magical rituals might be noticed here, one is that the woman married to a man after the death of his first wife, is made to wear round her neck a small piece of beaten gold, with a *repousse* image, meant to be the likeness of her predecessor. Its purpose is to ward off the wrath of the deceased wife from the one who has dared to occupy the place which was hers. This constant bearing on the heart by the successor of her predecessor's image mollifies and propitiates the सपत्नी. The second is when a man has been marrying time after time owing to the death of his previous wife—he becomes unpropitious and no one is willing to give his daughter to him, till he has performed the expiatory ceremony of being married to the holy Basil—the Tulasī plant.

In ancient times, the choosing of brides and bridegrooms was not done by the help of astrology, a pseudo-science which we learnt from the Chaldeans to our infinite harm. In a fair number of cases they chose each other, in the fashion of the English and Americans, but great care was taken to ascertain the physical and mental capacities of both, and their mutual compatibility and adaptability. Rules on this subject of examining the physical and mental consanguinity and purity of descent have been very strictly laid down by the Smriti compilers, and nowhere is horoscope examination mentioned as a necessary preliminary to marriages. (*Vide* Manu III. 7-11.) This rigid examination of the parties to a marriage is being strongly advocated by European scientists in these days, and forms an integral part of the new science of Eugenics.

It may be noted that the present Hindu practice among the three higher castes, who barely number 3 crores out of the Hindu population numbering nearly 20 crores, does not recognise a dissolution of marriage; and the remarriage of the woman. The Smriti law on the point however is quite clear, being based upon old customs which are recorded in the Vedas and even the Puranas. Such dissolution is allowed, nay recommended, under certain conditions in no less than seventeen contingencies, and the woman allowed freedom to marry again by Vedic rites. For quotations and proofs in support of the above statement, which is so opposed to modern orthodox practice and belief, the reader is referred to the exhaustive pamphlet "Widow Marriage," of the late Pandit Ishvara Chandra Vidyasagar and the late Mr. Justice M. G. Ranade's "Religious and Social Reform."

The question 'who is to give away the widow in marriage' is often put as a poser. The answer is simple. 'No one is required to give her away, she can do so herself.' The unquestionable correctness of the reply is borne out by the ritual of Gandharva marriages. Besides, Manu (IX. 90-91) definitely directs an unmarried girl who has not been given away in marriage by her parents to wait three years after attaining puberty, and then if she likes, to give away *herself* to a husband chosen by her. It would be of interest for the advocates of virgin-widow marriages to learn that the meaning of अक्षतयोनि as understood by them namely 'the non-consummation of marriage' is not the meaning as understood by the Shastra-Karas. According to the Kama-Sutra of the Rishi Vatsyayana, the word means a woman who has not borne children, one whose yoni (womb) has not fruited. Such an explanation enlarges very materially the circle of those who ought to be married again. As for the man, he is not hampered in any way either by public opinion or law, rather otherwise, for orthodoxy encourages him to marry and so he has gradually arrogated to himself the right of marrying again and again, and of calling these "unions of desire " marriages, a right which he has denied to the woman. But this does not hold true of the very large number of Hindus, who are said to belong to the fourth and fifth castes, and who form an overwhelming majority of the people. Their women, except among some subcastes, are generally free to divorce and remarry, and the heart-breaking question of widow-marriage seldom arises; and this for the simple reason that among these people marriage is regarded as a *contract*, and not as a *sacrament* and naturally there can be no bar to entering into as many *contracts* as one chooses. They freely allow divorces and remarriages of women. Says Manu (10.125) न शूद्रे पातकं किञ्चिन्न च संस्कारमर्हति—'There is no sin for the Shudra, nor is he entitled to any *Samskara* '

It may be pointed out here that in the 'marriage' ceremony as practised among the Nairs of Southern India, and the Newars of Nepal the woman never becomes a widow; or to put it in another way, she becomes a 'widow' at once after her first marriage, and always marries again. The explanation of this curious phenomenon is simple. The girls of both these people undergo a ceremonial, which might well be called a mock marriage, with this difference that the Nair girl is married to a man, who, after the ceremany is over, is paid for his troubles and goes right away after that and the woman never more sees him or knows what happens to him; while the Newar girl is married to some fruit, which is then thrown into a river.

NIYOGA

The question of Niyoga, of begetting children on a widow, or on a woman whose husband is alive but impotent, might also be dealt with here. Swami Dayanand Saraswati gave it the support of his great authority, especially as a way of getting over the awkward problems of divorce and of widow-marriages, but he did not succeed nor did he deserve to succeed. The practice is stone dead and has been rightly so for ever so long. Although there are a few examples of this practice in the old books, it is more than doubtful if it ever was a widely accepted custom. Veda Vyasa's begetting of children on the widows of his *younger* half-brothers and on their Shudra slave, is not Niyoga. Manu vacillates over the question, but the other Smritis are emphatic in their condemnation of such a practice. Even though Rome and Greece sanctioned the usage, it is abhorrent to a well-developed humanitarian conscience, with its ideals of a personal self-respecting individuality and inimical as it is bound to be to all forms of slavery. For the custom of Niyoga took it for granted that woman was only a chattel, or as Hindu books say a 'field' *owned* by some one man. How can a 'property' then, even though it be live, have a voice in the matter of its disposal by its owner. There could be no question of feeling. The 'field' must yield a 'harvest' to its master and if he could not till it, he could ask some more capable man to do the work for him, or in case of his death, the 'field' could be cultivated but only under the orders of the person in immediate control of the woman, and only in order to raise up a harvest for its defunct master. Such an act becomes adultery only when done without the cognisance and permission of the husband, or of his relatives, if he was dead.

MONOGAMY

It is scarcely necessary to point out that the true ideal of a marriage, and which alone can promote the real happiness of people, is best promoted by a life-long union of one man to one woman. Like prostitution, polygamy is a criminal aberration—I take no count of polyandry, as it exists nowhere in India—and it should be suppressed by law. Permanent monogomous unions, are the one sure basis on which the family, the society, and the State can be reared. Our social and political progress will largely depend upon our realisation of this not too difficult ideal in actual practice. John Stuart Mill's idea of what consitutes true marriage deserves to be kept in our memories always. He says:—

> " What marriage may be in the case of two persons of cultivated faculties, identical in opinions and purposes, between whom there exists that best kind of equality, similarity of powers and capacities, with reciprocal superiority in them—so that each can enjoy the luxury of looking up to the other, and can have alternately the pleasure of leading and being led in the path of development,—I will not attempt to

describe. To those who can conceive it there is no need; to those who cannot, it would appear the dream of an enthusiast. But I maintain, with the profoundest conviction, that this, and this only, is the ideal marriage; and that all opinions, customs, and institutions which favour any other notion of it, or turn the conceptions and aspirations connected with it into any other direction, by whatever pretences they may be coloured, are relics of primitive barbarism. The moral regeneration of mankind will only really commence when the most fundamental of the social relations is placed under the rule of equal justice, and when human beings learn to cultivate their strongest sympathy with an equal in rights and in cultivation."

All this, and much more, is contained in the brief statement of the Hindu ideal, that husband and wife are to be Deva and Devi (griha-Lakshmi), god and goddess, to one another.

DIVORCE

But at the same time it would be absurd to ignore the widely prevalent custom of Divorce. As pointed out above, even among the higher castes it is prevalent and is recognised, though it is so terribly one-sided. Among the non-Hindus and among the lower castes numbering nearly seventeen crores it is fully recognised. While I am a staunch advocate of permanent monogamous unions, I cannot be blind to the terrible hardship of the present widely divergent usages and laws on the point. I firmly hold that it would not debase but raise the standard of morality and increase the regard for the sanctity of marriage if a reasonable law on the subject were promulgated by the Indian legislature. Such a law should make no invidious sex differentiations, man and woman should be put on an equal footing in the matter. Whatever grounds are permitted to a husband for obtaining a divorce from his wife, the same grounds should be available for a wife in a suit against her husband. But I am afraid this is a cry in the wilderness. It was hopeless expecting marital or any other social, legislation from our Councils, which were so completely under the official thumb: and which demanded the impossible condition of universal agreement from the people, as was done by Sir Reginald Craddock, when he was Home Member. Such stringent conditions would paralyse even that freest of free assemblies the British Parliament. It is a criminal shirking of their responsibilities of which the British administrators of India have been latterly guilty, when after killing of all possibility of growth and progress in our personal laws by their hidebound law courts, they refused the help of legislation. Let us see what the new legislatures that have come into existence after 1919 with greater non-official powers over legislation do in such matters. But their proceedings make it abundantly clear that they are still beset with biases and prejudices in various quarters which hamper all attempts at social legislation.

Among the higher castes who, while permitting the discarding of a wife, do not permit these discarded wives to remarry and, still worse, do not allow girls even to reach puberty before giving them away in marriage, great abuses arise from old widowers marrying child-wives. These should be discouraged, either by allowing girls to grow up unmarried far beyond puberty—as among some of the highest castes of India ; f. i. the Nambudris of Malabar, the Gaudas, the Sarayuparis and Kanyakubjas of the United Provinces, the neo-brahmana Bhumihars of the United Provinces and of Bihar, and the Kulins of Bengal, besides Kshatriyas, Rajputs, Thakurs all over; among whom, sometimes, unmarried women of forty and even fifty are to be met with, or, better still, by prohibiting marriages of widowers after a certain age. As marriage has been ruled to be the only Samskara for girls of every caste, no efforts should be spared to fit them physically, emotionally, morally and intellectually for the duties of motherhood.

CHRISTIAN LIBELS.

It is very necessary to enter an emphatic protest against Western libels, whether missionary or other, against our womenkind and it might as well be done here. Our women, class for class, grade for grade, have nothing to fear from, a comparison with the women of the West, or far that matter, with any women anywhere in matters of conjugal fidelity. They are decidedly superior. Our married life is much happier than in the West. The curse of alcoholism is much less known to them (even after many decades of governmental patronage of liquor,) and there is no lawlessness of militant suffragettism with its bomb-throwings and incendiarism. The awful problem of enforced spinsterhood and a loveless, unrespected old age does not exist. The frequency of divorce is as nothing compared to what it is among the English, and in the U.S.A. specially, where the evil is so rampant that Banks require their clients to give their mother's name to make sure of the identity of the person concerned. Our system is a system of co-operation, of mutual help, between the two sexes, and not of blatant competition. We live up to the law of Nature, which prescribes different functions for the two sexes. The woman is the lady of the house, the pivot of the family. Nature did not intend her to be the food-supplier, Pati—the protector, Bharta,—the provider; she is essentially the tribe-supplier, the mother, the nurse. It is because we have so steadily held on to this ideal that there is so little criminality among our women, as compared with the record of the women of the West Our women are thoroughly domesticated as the British and American women are not. In place of the selfish, aggressive, irreverent individuality of the latter—forced upon them by the very wrong economic conditions of the West—we find among the former boundless self-effacement, abnegation, reverence for their husband and their families. A very sympathetic study of Indian womanhood has been made by Otto Rothfeld-" Women of India." It is a pleasure to see the pretty illustrations and read the author's shrewd remarks.

The English system of marriage, which means always a notice to clear out either to the marrying son or to the aged parents, is wholly obnoxious to us. Nor is the custom which throws youths and maidens together at their most impressionable ages, in search of life-partners at all desirable. How can love-hungry vigorous youth have enough self-control to be a good judge? Our system is far superior though it has been sadly abused. What is however wanted is that the conjoints concerned should have also an equal voice in the matter, which unfortunately they have not at present; but the requisite change is coming.

It is our men only that have to learn to practise a sterner and purer standard of sex morality, but can the West teach them this, seeing how deplorable the conditions are there? There is this much to be said though in favour of the Englishman, that he at least respects outwardly the canons of a higher sex morality and does not flout them so nakedly as the Hindu, and even more especially the Musalman with his legalised concubinage and polygamy, does.

All our books from the Vedas down to the Smritis teach that every Hindu is not only bound to get married but to procreate children. Our poems also deal with the subject in the same spirit. Kalidasa does not make king Dilipa ask for Sudakshina's hand on the Western plan of love, he boldly avows " I want a son from you." On this point there never has been any wobbling. A life-long continence, Brahmacharya, did not receive much encouragement. It was recognised as an abnormal condition.

The Smritis are very clear and definite on this point. No one who has not begotten a child, especially a male one, has fulfilled the purpose of creation, and discharged his debt to the Pitris. In the Taittiriya Aranyaka the Acharya, when dismissing the pupil after the completion of his studies, imparts this final admonition, "take care that the thread-line of thy race is not broken." The bachelor orders of Sannyasis, Bairagis, Udasis etc., recruiting their powerful and wealthy bands by inveigling immature boys—whom not unoften they misuse—into their ranks, are not only a nuisance, but are also distinctly prohibited in this Kali-Yuga by the Smritis. Even Shankaracharya, though he himself was responsible for bringing into existence one of the most powerful and learned order of monks in imitation of the Jain and Buddhist ascetic orders, in one of his Stotras has truly, though bitterly, remarked that—"Growing of hair, shaving it, pulling it out (as the Jainas do), and so on, are only various means of filling the belly: true Vairagya is a matter of the heart, not of externals." It seems that the fear of race suicide was as much to the fore in those ancient times, as it is to-day in the West. But there was a basic difference between the emotions which gave rise to the problem then, and the emotions which have given rise to it now.

Then the fear was due to over-much of religion, making people hanker after a life of asceticism; to-day it is due to over-much of irreligion and hedonism, which concerns itself wholly with the pampering of the body and does not worry for the 'beyond.' It is not through continence that it would commit race suicide, but through utmost physical luxury and self-indulgence carried on under conditions, which are known euphemistically as "prudential restraints" on parenthood. Unfortunately Western teaching is bringing these mostly harmful devices to the knowledge of the Indians also. When the Hindu of the olden days was faced with the vital problem, he tried to solve it in his characteristic way. The 'Bishops' propounded the philological connundrum of Putra; all those who had no Putra were doomed to be thrown in a hell of terrible sufferings known as Put. By this theological device, and by another threat about wasting one's seed, which also entailed heavy expiations, they to some extent checked the growing evil. If their out-look had been less bounded by their absurd theological theories about women being the arch ensnarer of man (then become fashionable through the Buddhist propaganda), they would have seen that their remedy did not touch the root of the matter, for these injunctions applied only to men and not to the women, the real tribe suppliers. So what with their misogynistic views and the egotism of the average man, the necessity of conceding to women the right to an exercise of their most imperious instinct, namely that of motherhood was not recognised. Under the guise of religion this prime necessity of her existence was denied to every woman who had the misfortune to become a widow. Society deliberately shut its eyes to the frightful evils that follow from continence *enforced from outside*. But for this eggregious, nay criminal, blunder our position in the world would have been far better than it is to-day. Of course, this is not the only cause of the diminution in the number of the Hindus. Religious exclusiveness, due primarily to Brahmanic bigotry and touch-me-not-ism, is an even greater cause. Our birth rate is lower than that of the Musalman, who has no widow-problem to solve. He not only breeds more, but he breeds from a sturdier stock and he is rapidly gaining in number. The surest way to keep burning for future generations the light of our ancient and hard-preserved culture, is to remove all artificial man-made restraints on the propagation of children, where economic conditions are not obviously adverse.

We find confident assertions made that a life of celibacy is absolutely necessary for spiritual growth, and thanks to these emphatic and insistent assertions, we have not only an enormously large number of ignorant and vicious Sadhus eating up the fat of the land, but the belief in the power of celibacy has become deeply implanted in the Hindu breast. A little proper consideration would show, that this mischievious idea is foreign to ancient Hinduism, and we owe its introduction into latter-day Hinduism to the absorption of Buddhistic teachings on the point. The Vedic Rishis were all married men, some had even more than one wife, and that celibacy was a necessary preliminary training for the Soul's growth never formed an article of their creed. The reason is plain. In those days, a girl enjoyed the same liberty and facilities of education as her brother, was not forced into marrying against her own inclinations, and was allowed to choose her husband, as also her own time of marriage, and was given a share of her father's property like her brothers if, as in some rare cases, she decided to remain unmarried and stayed in her father's house. The real reason of the growth of opinion in favour of celibacy is that marriage is no longer a widening of the outlook, no more the bringing of the 'lady' of the home. It is merely the satisfaction of the need for physical companionship, and not a union of two mental and spiritual worlds into one. Marriage instead of being a spur has become a soporific, and we, in our supreme male purblindness have not cared to apply the remedy at the root and give back to the woman the position she once occupied, but have deluded ourselves by abusing woman as the fount of all evil and keeping her tied down to her present lowly condition as a mere toy for the lordly man.

The indispensable sensory basis of love instead of being treated as only a step in the conquest of existence, as a necessary prelude to the blossoming of the higher love and its fruitage, spiritual comradeship, has unfortunately and most disastrously been treated as an end in itself to the infinite degradation of not only woman the victim, but also of man the tyrant. Tennyson has given exquisite expression in "The Princess"—A Medley, to the ideal of the relation that should subsist between the two sexes : —'The woman's cause is the man's, they rise or sink together.' It is the woman that is the real civiliser and tamer of the aboriginal, fierce brute instincts of the man. It was her influence that made the warring nomad settle down to a life of peaceful agriculture and all its civilising influences wherever physical conditions permitted of such a radical change in tribal life. Not misogyny, or its correlate misandry, is the goal of life, but true and full-bodied love, knowledge and devotion.

The woman-hater urges that the nervous system of woman is so organised that her psychic life, her imaginations, her dreams evoke a much stronger repercussion on her waking daily life than they do in men. Hence her habitual and general inaccuracy. She becomes a victim of her emotions much more than man. Her lies, unlike those of men, are seldom deliberate, mostly unconscious, and therefore harder to guard against. She may almost be said to be always on the verge of hysteria, and so on and on. But surely, while all this long list of indictments is perfectly accurate, the conclusion sought to be drawn from it—that she is to be (a) treated merely either as a toy to be played with in man's leisure moments according to the animal philosophy of the man about town, or (b) avoided as a veritable hell-fire according to the socalled philosophy of asceticism, or (c) as the middle course between these two extremes, the course of the average man of the world, that it is best for her and him also that she should be kept under life-long surveillance in a Reformatory School—every such conclusion is all wrong. The proper and correct deduction is that while such psycho-physical factors should always be taken into account in one's dealings with women in all concerns of life, *e.g.*, with a woman as accuser, or as a witness in a criminal case, or as a dealer in religious nostrums, and due allowance made for her special weaknesses, yet she is to be treated as a grown up responsible person possessing an individuality of her own.

The other side of the problem, namely that of man-hating woman, is a special blessing of the West; it does not exist in the East, for which fact we cannot be too thankful.

This deeply rooted notion that continence is a cardinal virtue and an absolutely necessary condition for the acquiring of spiritual wisdom and release from the bondage of the world, and that sex-relations barely escape being cardinal sins by being carried out under a properly ordained marriage, is impossible to justify in practice, though the fact of its existence and even prevalence may be accounted for by various metaphysical considerations, besides the sociological ones advanced above. It is as much a natural function as any other, whose performance or non-performance is to be treated neither as something inimical to progress and sinful, nor as something which brings liberation and produces merit. No one who sits down to dinner is regarded as a sensuous fool who has thrown away a golden opportunity for going straight to Heaven; nor does one attempt to attract attention to one's self as being something specially holy by non-obedience to the peristaltic urgings. It may become a crime when it interferes with the rights of others, it may become a disease, like diabetes or dysentery when its activity has become abnormal. It can never be a sin. It is folly to regard a man or a woman as something specially holy or great, simply because of their celibate life. By itself it is, more likely than not, due to physiological causes. If we only learnt to take up the correct attitude with regard to celibacy, professionalism in the matter would soon be dead, and only those would be left practising it who either had a congenital dislike to the married state, or were practising it with some special end in view. When it ceases to be reverenced, it will cease to be flaunted. *Per se* there is no sin-generating power in the act of generation. One might repeat the old adage—evil to him who evil thinks.

It may be useful to go into this question of celibacy a little more, seeing how firm a hold it has not only on the hearts of Hindus, but also on those of so many other people of the world.

It needs no pointing out that as far as the mere procreating function is concerned there is little difference between humans and animals. As far back as the fifth century A. D. Bhartrihari had said—

आहारनिद्राभय मैथुनं च सामान्यमेतत् पशुभिर्नराणाम् ।

hunger, sleep, fear, co-habitation were attributes common to men and animals. But the *significance* of human evolution and its civilisation as contrasted with animal evolution, consists in the differentiation of the physical art of love from its psychic counter-part; in *adding* on to the importance of the perpetuation of the species, the no less, if not greater, importance of the emotion of *love*—a pre-eminently human feeling. Now love is mainly a desire for complete union, and as far as the two conjoints to it are concerned, the wish for procreation may be wholly absent. Unlike animals, man has succeeded in separating its psychic aspect from its physical—love for its own sake, and love for procreation—and because of this separation of the two elements has he so laboriously built up all this civilisation. Love helps self-expansion—irrespective of its physical aspect therefore it is indispensable for soul growth.

Notwithstanding his penchant for a celibate life, the Hindu has always 'visioned' his gods as married ones. Even that supreme type of the ascetic, Mahadeva, has his consort. An unmarried life is, emphatically, an incomplete life, an anti-social life, inimical to all civilisation and to be strenuously avoided by all right thinking normal persons. In China no unmarried person was employed by the State. He could not be trusted.

No one who has studied the Puranas can have failed to see that *every* attempt at leading a life of complete sexual abstinence ended in dismal failure. All these Rishis—whether great or small—were betrayed into most deplorable errors. The very attempt to lead an asexual life means that the subject is *ever present* in the person's thoughts. The incredible violence of the sexual perceptions of these 'holy ascetics' is well brought out by the statements that their conjugations lasted tens of thousands of years. Love denied became monstrous lust. The sex aberrations of modern celibate orders are not hidden from any but the 'faithful.' It is only 'inverts' and 'perverts' that hold the low opinion about woman, so fashionable among the professional Yogis and Vedantis. These people are the enemies of all true civilisation and progress. Their unnatural mode of life leads inevitably to either hideous sexual aberrations with all their physical, moral and social injuries and crimes; or, if successfully persisted in, to neurasthenic conditions diseasing the body and disorganising the intellect and the emotions, making of life a wreck by the developing of hysteria, melancholia, hallucinations etc., due to the unbearable tension.

So it has been laid down in our books that *every one* was *bound* to get married and *bound* to beget children.*

ASHRAMA.

We have dealt above in detail with the two most important actions in a Hindu's life, namely his initiation into sacred studies through the ceremony of Upanayana, with its vow of Brahmacharya; and then after the close of studentship, his marriage. These are two recognised "Stages of Life" out of the four that have been laid down for him in the post-Vedic books. The remaining two are Vanaprastha, and Sannyasa. It may as well be pointed out here, because of the widely current mistake in the use of the words, that when the two words 'Varna' and 'Ashrama' are used together as a compound word 'Varnashrama', the meaning becomes entirely different: it means the Dharma of the person of the particular caste at the particular stage; for instance, the Danda of the Brahmana is to be of Palasha, and so forth. The compound word does not connote what the two words making it up connote separately, but takes on an entirely different significance.

The word Vanaprastha from Vana, forest and Prasthana to start for a journey, means a hermit, the man who has started for the forest. It is that third stage of a man's life which he enters after fulfilling his duties as a householder. He makes over all his property and business to his sons, and retires with his wife into solitude and a religious life, away from the competitive life of the world. The proper time to enter this state according to Manu is, either when a man has become a grandfather, or his skin has begun to wrinkle and his hair to turn grey वलीपालितम् While in this Ashrama he is not freed from the trammels of ritual.

---

* Any of my readers who feel an interest in the subject of sex relations in the West, might study Prof. Iwan Block's "The Sexual Life of Our Time". It is a book which while full of facts and figures and searching analysis is unfortunately wholly 'objective' in its reflections on the question. The want of a religious basis is its serious drawback, with its consequent apotheosis of the body as against that of the soul.

The fourth stage of life is that of complete renunciation—Sannyasa. In this stage the man must wander out all by himself. He must discard even his wife, and must not dwell for long in any place, or own anything. He is freed from all ritual observances. This is the theory, the practice is far different. There are endless sub-divisions and orders of such recluses, each laying down most stringent rules for the guidance of the special flock, and these rules are of the most divergent kinds and not unoften quite opposed to the rules of some other Order. A great deal of ritual has crept into every one of these various orders of ascetics, and as a rule they all are as hide-bound as their 'sons' in the 'unrenunciated' stage of the householder. The wholesome rule that ordinarily he only who has passed through the first three stages is entitled to enter the fourth, has always been more honoured in the breach than in the observance. Nay, the rule is even more stringent. In the list of things forbidden in this Kaliyuga is included Sannyasa also and rightly so ; for owing to economic and sexual demoralisation, due to the large bodies of persons (the number of persons living by 'mendicancy' of all kinds, of all religions, returned by the census of 1901 is 52 lakhs) who have adopted this mode of life, not because of the impellings of a true and lasting Vairagya, but out of manifold selfishnesses, it is condemned by all right thinking and truly religious persons.

Unfortunately to the great harm of India, both social and religious, all these wise precautionary rules have never been regarded as more than mere pious lucubrations of their authors, not meant to be taken seriously as imperative injunctions to be literally obeyed, but only to be used for sheer display purposes, and so they have been systematically disregarded and every fellow who is too worthless to be a good citizen, shirks his civil duties and forth-with dons the ochre-colored robe, thus becoming Mukta, 'free'—free to live in luxury and vice at the expense of his better but more credulous fellow-citizens.

This theory of four clear cut stages of life is wholly the product of the post-Buddhistic influences. It is unknown to the Vedas. It is unknown even to the ten major Upanishads. The people referred to as Rishis in the Vedas were all married folk and not ascetics. In fact they were very much like those Brahmanas of to-day who follow the profession of priests for their *livelihood* and have not taken up worldly professions for money-making like the vast majority of their castefellows. These people who had not yet learned to "look before and after, and pine for what is not" did not despise life and regard its enjoyments as a snare. They had not degenerated into a race of anæmic and dyspeptic philosophers. Look at the great Yajnavalkya who was an upper India Rishi who had wandered from his home in the Western Division of the present U. P. to Mithila, then under the rule of the famous King Janaka; and how unblushingly he orders the 1,000 cows, offered as a prize by the King, to be driven over to his place by his disciples, without waiting for the adjudication of the prize, simply because he wanted them. Men of such temper could scarcely be expected to approve of people who would be above the considerations of Dakshina, baksheesh, for which these people lived. That there were wandering ascetics, men who were in a peculiar ecstatic condition, and known as Munis is certain, but they stood apart from the minutely regulated life of the community—not as a class, but each one by himself.

The earliest use of the word Ashrama as denoting the stages in a Hindu's life is to be found in a patently late upanishad, the Shvetashvatara. The Chhandogya (VIII 5) promises freedom from transmigration to both Brahmacharin and householder, as a reward for study, the procreation of children, the practice of Yoga, abstention from injury to living creatures, and sacrifices. It also refers to three states (II. 23, 1), but *not* as consecutive, and contrasts them all with the man who stands fast in Brahma. In the Brihadaranyaka also the knowers of Atma are contrasted favourably with the others. Later this position of superiority to the student, the householder and the hermit, was raised into recognition as a fourth stage; and for this it paid dearly by being bound down by strict rules of procedure killing out all spontaneity and *life* from it.

It should be remembered that these four stages are not for all the four castes, they are only meant for the Brahmana. The Shudra, the once-born, has no sacraments, not even that of marriage. In fact the old Hindu law on the subject of the marriage of Shudras is as prejudiced and as barbarous as that of the Christian colonial governments of civilised Great Britain with regard to the marriage relation of *all* Asiatics—it treats them as concubinage and not legal unions. The Vaishya and the Kshatriya may become Vanaprasthas but not Sannyasins—for these were of a higher social status than the Brahmana and it was as impossible for them to concede a higher status than their own to any non-Brahmana, as it is for the swelled-headed European to concede it to an Asiatic. Sankaracharya, the great Vedantic teacher, would have none but Brahmanas study Vedanta. The student-stage, Brahmacharya, was, as has already been pointed out above, also only nominal for these two castes. There are practically no examples of any men of these two castes devoting themselves to the minimum twelve years' course of Vedic studies. But in spite of all Brahmanic attempts at keeping the fourth stage a close preserve for their own castes, the monopoly has never been recognised in actual practice; there are lakhs and lakhs of Sadhus from the low castes all over the country.

I need scarcely point out that this precise marking out of the various stages proper to a well-led orthodox life is as much a product of priestly schematism as the fourfold caste-system. In this minutely regulated and graded theory of stages with its pessimistic basis that life is a nuisance and to be worked out of as speedily as each individual can manage, there is no room for national solidarity, for the coherence of individual atoms, for civic interest and racial development. But as practice has always fallen very far short of this mechanical method of the disposal of one's life—though the ever present under-current of the theory has been constantly vitiating the results—it did not become quite so blank as it would have, if there had been real life in this image of gold with feet of clay. The present day growth of political homogeniety and specially the sense of civic responsibility is acting as a ferment, causing all the unrest, the ebullition in the stagnant waters of our social, intellectual, emotional, economic, political and civic life which we see all around us. The birth of these two factors is due to the fierce impact of the democratic theories of the West with its rights of man, its deadly hatred of monopolies, whether in the sphere of religion or of government, its exaltation of merit as against mere birth; the freeing of temporal power from its gross and crushing subjection to ecclesiastical power, and its vocational freedom breaking down the caste barriers of restraint.

AFTER-DEATH RITES

After having dealt with the life of a Hindu in its four stages, namely, as an unmarried student, as a married householder, as a settled hermit in the company of his wife, and finally as a lone wandering ascetic; and seen that the theory when reduced to actual practice means only two stages namely the married man of the world and the 'above-world' lone man, we shall now deal with the all important question of after-death rites. In passing, it may be pointed out that the universal practice of removing the dying Hindu from under a roof into an open space under the sky and laying him on the ground, seems to be a very ancient custom and which has been voiced authoritatively by the Mahabharata. The verse in question runs.

अधर्मस्सुमहानिष यच्छय्यामरणं गृहे ।
अरण्ये वा विमुच्येत संग्रामे वा तनुन्नरः ॥

"It is great sin to die at home on a bed. The body should be given up either in a forest (after a life of asceticism) or in battle for a righteous cause". This high ideal is now become a mere travesty. Various have been and are the ways which different religious communities deal out to their dead. Behind this bewildering variety of methods lies some theological belief, which is the root-cause of these manifold ways. And it is only when these get changed that a change in the method of treatment of the dead comes. It is because of the obstructive power of these beliefs that all rational, sanitary ways of disposing of dead bodies becomes such an uphill, almost hopeless struggle.

Our method is by cremation. It is the most sanitary and effective way of disposing of a dead body. It has the added very great merit of making impossible the birth of cults whose cardinal doctrines turn on the worship of rotting corpses and prayers to these. Buddhism suffers from this, but it is in Islam and Catholic Christianity that we find the evil at its full height. Even Hinduism is not absolutely free from such aberrations, the reason for which will become clear as soon as we call to mind that we still preserve two more ways of disposal of the dead, namely of throwing the body in running waters, as in the case of infants and of ascetics, and also that of burying, an alternative practice exclusively employed for the latter. It is the Islamic example with regard to this custom which has affected most perniciously the Hindu mind also. The lower classes have taken to it *en masse*, and even among the higher classes—not excepting the Brahmana—are found men offering prayers and puja to the tombs of Pirs and Shahids, in expectation of material benefits. Another ugly custom which happily is being steadily given up, is that of not cremating the bodies of lepers, and of small-pox cases but throwing them either in running waters or burying them. The Burmans strangely enough reverse this practice of burying ascetics and burning householders. They burn the monks and bury the laity. So also the Tibetans to this extent, that their holiest Lamas are cremated.

The Parsi method of exposing naked the dead bodies to feed a horde of gruesome vultures revolts one's tender sentiments, but as water fire and earth are all sacred, they may not be defiled by contact with a corpse. Perhaps the installation of electric furnaces in which the body does not come into contact with either water, fire, or earth may in time produce a change among them. Not only is he not to defile these elements in this way himself, he is enjoined further to prevent even forcibly such defilement by others. Dr. Jivanji Jamshedji Modi in an article in the J. B. B. of the R. A. S. for 1914-1915, Vol. XXIV, p. 88 says that according to Zoroastrianism the ground in which dead bodies are buried feels aggrieved against the persons who commit such acts, and still more so against persons who enclose the bodies in coffins before burying and raise structures over them. While on the contrary it feels delighted with those persons who destroy such structures and disintering the corpses expose them to be devoured by birds and beasts. It is clearly impossible for a people holding such beliefs and practices to live in neighbourly amity with those who believe in burials and mausoleums. No wonder that Islam mercilessly stamped out Parsi-ism in the land of its home, when political power passed into the hands of the conquering Muslim hordes.

The most hideous method however seems to be that of the Tibetans, who have a class of exceedingly degraded creatures—it would be profanation to call them human beings, known as Ragyabs, whose business it is to cut up the dead and then throw them to the dogs and pigs which abound in Lhassa, and horrible to relate, these pigs are used to feed men, laymen and Lamas alike. (*Vide*, 'Landon's "Lhassa"). Sir Sven Hedin in his work " Trans-Himalaya " calls these creatures Lagba. In Shigatse, another very holy place of Tibet, there are no pariah dogs, and so all the corpses, men, women, and children are skinned, flesh scraped off, bones broken etc. " Sacred dogs ' are kept for disposing of the bodies of priests (Ch. XXIX.)

Earlier than the Theological factors is the Economic factor, making for the variety in the disposal of the dead body. The natural tendency of all living animals, 'when they feel dissolution approaching, is to creep into some quiet dark nook, and die. Man also behaves similarly when in a primitive state; and the corpse when not devoured by birds and beasts rots where it lies. At a later stage corpses are either thrown into running waters or buried. Cremation is a comparatively late method, it did not come into general use even after man had learned to make fire and had a plentiful supply of firewood, because the earlier ways had become fixed by then. It was only later, as in Greece after the Migrations, and when the tombs of the dead ancestors could no longer be protected from the desecrating hands of foreigners and enemies, cremation came gradually into vogue; as the surest means of baulking enemies of their delight in desecrating graves and mauling the dead bodies. That such ghoulish practices are not a speciality of the non-European races is well-known to people who keep in touch with the history of the sempiternal strife in the Balkans. Even the highly civilised Englishman is not above acting in such putrid ways, when as History tells us all aristocrats went into hysterical rejoicings over the desecration of Cromwell's grave. Even so late as the 20th century we have the spectacle of Kitchener desecrating the grave of the Mahdi and only one solitary voice in the House of Commons being raised in condemnation, while the House voted a war present of a hundred thousand pounds and a peerage to him. We see both practices, cremation and burial, in Vedic India, and it was many centuries later that cremation became the general practice, and burial was practically given up. One probable reason, apart from the Theological and the Economic, is most likely Magical. All students of Magical lore know that it is a firmly established belief that it is necessary to come into *contact* with the person to be operated upon, and it is immaterial whether this contact is direct or indirect, *i.e.*, anything which had come into direct contact with the person will serve the purpose of the Magicians. So also a dead person's soul could be harmed by getting *en rapport* with it by means of the corpse. What better preventive against such horrid, unholy actions, than the utter destruction of the body itself by fire?

The rites over the dead have been slowly changing and to-day they are very different from those whose records we have in the Vedas; besides, they differ from place to place and from caste to caste. For instance the custom of branding a bull calf and letting it loose with four cow calves, is practically dead all over British India. The latter-day prejudice against any but castemen or Brahmanas carrying the dead body is diminishing and the older practice of carrying the dead on bullock carts or allowing others than their own castemen or Brahmanas to carry the dead is being revived. The Kapala-Kriya, smashing the skull of the dead after placing it on the funeral pyre, is revolting to modern sentiment and is being shirked.

After-death rituals all the world over are a queer mixture of actions born of affection and genuine grief at the separation, and of fear of the ghost of the dead person. Ecclesiasticism taking advantage of both these depressing emotions has evolved minute regulations from which it generally—at least in India—derives good material profit.

The Garuda Purana deals very fully with the subject, and the ritual part—as apart from the descriptive parts, dealing with the geography and social conditions of the Hells and the Heaven to which the Souls go—has been farther elaborated into an enormous mass of absurd complexities in the various Digests, Nibandhas, on Shraddha and Ashaucha. The various ways for cheating and mollifying the souls of the dead are simply pitiable for the simplicity of their ignorance which underlies them. How strong is the force of custom ,in all such matters and how much terrible odium innovators have to incur, is very clearly shown by the simple fact that the highly civilised and individualistic West which knows by the preachings of generations of sanitarians that cremation is the only sensible way of disposing of dead bodies, is unable to shake of ancient thraldom and continues to bury its dead. In this respect the savage African Masai are far more civilised than their white conquerors and traducers.

We may now say a few words about what should be our attitude towards death. The living should neither turn the solemn occasion into one of flippant, shameless buffoonery, nor into one of prolonged, inconsolable grief and lamentation. Punjab offers examples of both these extremes. When an old man or woman dies then all the relatives assemble and making rag images of the dead set to skirmishing round it and indulging in all sorts of very unedifying pranks; when a young person dies then the lamentation is kept up for years. Both these attitudes with their corresponding actions are absolutely unjustifiable, whether we invoke the authority of our sacred books or of our own intellect. Not a wild orgy of the emotions of pleasure and fun or of pain and sorrow, but a sober balancing of the emotions is what is required on the occasion. Farther, the 'art of dying,' has to be cultivated no less than the 'art of living,' and this should not be difficult for us in view of the magnificent teachings and splendid examples left to us in our ancient history. Even to-day the art is not wholly dead and forgotten, but alas! so very few are the people who make preparations betimes for this experience which all must go through. Even our lay poetry is permeated with this idea of 'holy' living. and 'holy' dying. As our great poet Kalidas (about 5th century A.D.) has finely put it in his description of the Kings of Raghu's race they all योगेनान्ते तनुत्यजाम् cast off their bodies in Yogic meditation. Every one should learn the supreme lesson of dying gracefully, of dying peacefully. Why cannot folk die calmly in a properly dignified way? Why does death almost invariably find people unprepared, and in a state of most ignoble panic at this supreme test of every individual life? Most truly does Edward Carpenter say that:—"The usual course of preparation for this most important event seems to be (barring accidents) something as follows—a physically unhealthy and morally stupid life, which inevitably leads to degenerative tendencies and ultimately to distinct disease; then one or two breakdowns, which lead to panic, and the summoning of Doctors; then partial recovery, and a repetition *da capo* of the whole series, without any the least improvement in the general style of life; then of course worse breakdown and panic leading at last to violent drugs, injections, operations, and so forth, in the hope of prolonging existence a few hours; and finally death arriving, not graciously, but in the sense of a dismal defeat and rout to everybody concerned; and to the patient a hurried, confused and embittered end, robbed of all decency and dignity." (The Drama of Love and Death p. 73).

A deep and earnest study of the Gita and the Upanishads, of the Yoga Sutras and the Yoga Vasishtha; of the Moksha-dharma chapter of the Mahabharata and other similar works in the various vernaculars, will guide the genuine enquirer to the cultivation of that philosophic attitude of mind which regards death not as an undesirable, painful, inimical visitant, against whose intrusion a fruitless and futile battle is to be waged; but as a helpful benefactor, and loving friend, who has come to release the soul from its outworn vesture, which, after a long and full life of usefulness, has become an imprisoning, torturing fetter.

ASHAUCHA—CEREMONIAL IMPURITY

Intimately connected with the ritual for the dead is the practice of segregation of those who have helped to carry the dead body or are the relatives of the dead person. This impurity is also incurred for births and certain other happenings also. It is an imaginary uncleanliness from which persons are supposed to suffer under certain conditions ; the wholly arbitrary and absurd nature of which will be clear from the description given below of its ways of observance and the changes it has undergone from time to time and the different ways in which it is observed in different parts of the country. It is alleged that it began in hygienic reasons, but however it may have begun, it has always been wholly and purely ceremonial and so far has it travelled from its alleged hygienic roots that many of these observances definitely promote diseases. That Magic and not sanitation is the root cause of all these observances, is well-known to all students of Anthropology, who have devoted a great deal of attention to the history of the problem among the various Nations, Tribes and Races of the world, civilised and uncivilised. Everywhere it has been found that Theological beliefs and not Medical science has been the presiding genius at the birth of these customs. Not the guarding of the physical body from infection, but the guarding of the soul-body from unknown dangers has been their parent. An unbiassed, open-eyed study of the chapters dealing with this subject in our Dharma Shastra books will bring home the point attempted to be put briefly here.

There are three kinds of "impurities," One is especial to women only. The two others are due to births and deaths respectively of relatives within certain degrees of relationship. That due to deaths extends over ten days for a Brahmana, twelve days for a Kshatriya, fifteen days for a Vaishya and thirty days for a Shudra. Some of the later Rishis probably seeing the ludicrous and indefensible nature of this wonderful arrangement, and, *may be*, stimulated into some sense by the economic disorganisation which must have resulted from "untouchableness" for such long periods, of indispensable members of Society reduced the period all round to ten days. To farther simplify matters it was laid down that the King never became "impure," nor even anyone who was urgently wanted by the King (Yajnavalkya Smriti Ch. III. Sh. 21). It is not clear whether this rule applies to a Queen also, especially if she be a regnant Queen; in which case it may become necessary that she should not undergo even the usual seclusion every month. Neither do those become impure who are engaged in cooking and distributing food in Sattras—sacrificial sessions. As a matter of fact the betelsellers, the sweetmeat sellers and sellers of other edibles do not cease to practise their trade and so cannot be said to observe "impurity." This untouchability shows curious divergences of practice. Amongst some sections of the people only the chief mourner, the man who has lighted the funeral pyre, is untouchable, while the other relatives are touchable but only impure for certain special purposes, &c., they cannot recite Veda-mantras or do the daily worship. Amongst others, the relatives too are untouchable, together with the chief mourner; while in yet another section, who equally stringently maintain the untouchable character, the chief mourner is untouchable in a higher degree and keep apart from the other relatives. The climax of absurdity and sacerdotalism is reached when it is gravely asserted by a Rishi that the parents of a girl are "untouchable" for the *whole of their life*, if she has attained her periods before marriage and died in her father's family. (*Vide* Nirnayasindhu p. 447) According to Yajnyavalkya not only no impurity is to be observed by the kinsmen of deceased heretics, thieves, women who have murdered their husbands, or led unchaste lives, people given to drinking liquors, and suicides, but even no libations of water are to be given to the deceased. If the above injunction were to be actually observed then the Kshattriyas and the Shudras should not observe impurity at all for their caste rules permit liquor drinking. We see throughout that the nature of the disease causing death is never once in the heads of these Rishis, and this ought to dispose of the modern attempts to bolster up these rituals with the help of Western Science. To emphasize the wholly non-medical character of these observances it should not be forgotten that the books lay down that under exceptional circumstances like famines, epidemics, the "untouchability" is removed by mere bathing. Epidemics are just the very occasions when the laws of sanitation require segregation,—(*vide* Nirnayasindhu p. 470).

The ceremonial of purification for men consists in shaving their heads, beards and moustaches—not necessarily now-a-days all the three, various gradations having been built up by custom—and paring their nails and bathing. For women there is no shaving; only paring of nails and bathing.

With regard to "birth-impurities" the rules are very similar but have been relaxed very much in practice and even the law-books themselves reflect this laxity of practice. The relatives are "impure" only and not "untouchable" and little or no restriction attaches about the appearance of these "impure" relatives at formal dinners and their inviting of others to such dinners. In fact it could not be otherwise, as religious ceremonies with Vedic Mantras have to be performed after the child's birth, which would become impossible if rigid "impurity" were imposed. It is only the poor mother who is to be treated as a Pariah and not "touched." This untouchability is limited to ten days amongst some, to thirty days amongst others and forty days amongst still others. While the written law removes her "impurity" and consequently the "untouchability" in twenty days if she has become the mother of a *boy* and in thirty days if she has given birth to a *daughter*; evidently the poor girl baby, all unconscious, was penalised from her very birth. To make patent the artificial character of all such impositions it only remains to be noted that if the baby dies within this period, all "impurity" ceases at once as if by magic, birth and death have neutralised each other's dreadful consequences. All this is a curious kind of "impurity", not easy to grasp by a lay mind, especially seeing that the repetition of the Gayatri and the offering of water to the Sun may not be omitted under pains and penalties.

With regard to the monthly impurity of women, it is nothing short of criminal the way in which stringent segregation is imposed upon them. In some parts of the country the girl is sent out of the house and has to spend her three days of martyrdom as a Pariah, untouching and untouched under the shelter of a tree or in an outhouse all by herself, for no one, not even a woman in the same predicament may touch her, each one living separately and by herself. At best an out-of-the-way dirty corner of the house is reserved for such, where food is thrown to her on leaves and earthen pots which she must destroy forthwith. Seeds of many diseases and of hysteria are laid up in these days which later bear a fruitful crop of lifelong misery. The doctrinaire character of these wretched observances is fully shown when the old law of segregation *throughout* the time of flow has been subverted in favour of a universal three days quarantine.

SHAUCHA—PURITY.

The ground having been cleared by an understanding of the teaching about Ashaucha, its obverse side, namely what makes for Shaucha may now be presented. Here again we see that three distinct, and often opposed, sets of ideas, namely, magical, sanitary and philosophical, have gone to the building up of a strangely jumbled structure, including both what is good and wholesome, as also what is otherwise and has source in mere primitive Magic. It means to us, using the word in its most comprehensive sense, all the various methods of keeping the physical body and the finer bodies pure and healthy, and of so coordinating them that they will all work in harmony without producing jangle and discord.

The rules for the preservation of the efficiency and purity of the physical body are dealt with not only in our medical books, like Charaka, Vaghbhata and many others, but also in our Dharma Shastra works like Manu and other Smritis and over which unfortunately the commentators and Digest-writers have spent an enormous amount of badly misdirected learning and ingenuity, reducing it all to a most pathetic, when not pathologic, absurdity. The works on Yoga also deal with the subject, but they too have not escaped the besetting failing of the Hindu intellect, of never knowing when they have had enough; the syllogism must be rigidly worked out to its logical, or illogical conclusion. But after having said all these hard things about the vast majority of these rules, I wish to point out that there are some very wholesome ones, and which should not be rejected blindly. What is wanted is an eclectic selection, which will combine all that is best on the subject irrespective of whether it comes from the modern West or the ancient East. We shall give below some of the rules and regulations which according to Hinduism make for puritv theologically, philosophically and medically.

The rules for preserving and enhancing the purity and efficiency of the physical body are—scrupulous cleanliness all round, healthy and happy surroundings, (a very large amount of healthiness depends upon the proper tone of mind); regular exercise, abstemiousness in food and drink, (among the well-to-do classes most illnesses are due to unconscious gluttony, as among the poorer classes they are due to semi-starvation); a well-regulated moral sex-life, preventing the terrible consequences of venereal infection (to the individual, to the family, and to the race); avoidance of " drugs and drinks that work the wit abuse," like tobacco, bhang, alcoholic beverages, opium, ganja, charas, and the latest of the whole lot, Cocaine; periodical rest for the body and nerves, eschewing worry; avoidance of exposure to the summer Sun, and winter chills; the avoidance of flesh-foods; of vegetables like garlic and onions, chiefly because of the extremely unpleasant odours their essential oils give out, making fetid the perspiration and breath of those who freely indulge in them. It will come as a great surprise to Hindus and possibly no less to Musalmans who use these quite extensively, that Mohammad who abhorred everything that produced nasty odours, and was very fond of scents and unguents condemned them as evil vegetables. (*Vide.* Prof. D. S. Margoliouth's "Mohammad" p. 64 where he quotes *Musnad* iv. 12, in support of the above.)

Briefly then; As the physical body is the basis of not only all wordly activity, but also of 'other-worldly' activity—as it has been well said, शरीरमाद्यं खलु धर्मसाधनं, the body is the primary means for the doing of Dharma—so it must be kept in the highest state of efficiency possible. It is 'the temple of the lord' so it must be treated with great reverence; no ill-treatment, no torturings, no dissipations can be allowed to defile and wreck 'the temple.'

It is rather unfortunate that hygienic and sacerdotal rules and practices have got mixed up badly in Hinduism, by which intimate connection the hygienic rules sometimes suffer grievously. Under the paradoxical guise of purity many dirty practices have been engrafted and it is very difficult to make the bulk of the people realise their filthy character and give them up. For instance it is the very acme of "cleanliness" to besmear one's body with cowdung, and to take one's food on a "table cloth" of cowdung. To eat cow dung and drink cow's urine and to besmear one's face and body after bath with "burnt dung" is highly meritorious and sin-removing in its effects! And it is not Hinduism alone that suffers from such an incubus. It is so everywhere, where sanitary principles have not been differentiated from ritual and assigned their true position of domination in all matters that concern physical well-being.

The Indian Musalman by his practice shows that he can best satisfy his religious conscience by most flagrantly outraging that of the Hindu in the matter of Cow sacrifice, when he could very well substitute goats or buffaloes, and thus avoid perpetuating and even widening the chasm between the two communities. He would probably be horrified to learn that his Islamic brothers in other parts of the world, where the cow has not been made into a theological bone of bitter contention, treat the 'products' of the cow very much in the same way as the Hindu does. In Morocco for instance, cowdung is used as a purifying agent. The Oblo of Central Africa have even a firmer and more far reaching faith in the purifying magic virtues of cow's urine. They not only wash their hands with it just before starting to milk, but they also rinse the milking vessel with it and even put a little of it in the milk! The Eskimo are the only people who have carried this practice to its 'logical' conclusion, for they use their own urine to wash themselves.

There is no injunction or prohibition to be found in the Smritis as regards eggs. But it seems that eggs never formed part of a Hindu's dietary. The reason probably was the theological one; Bhruna-hatya—destruction of a *fetus* being a cardinal sin. No mention of their use occurs in secular or sacred literature. There seems to be no medical reason against their use; if anything rather in favour of them.

With regard to flesh, it stands in a wholly different category. The reasons against its use as food are many—medical, economic, theologic, humanitarian. To take them one by one briefly: Western medicine is finding out that the habitual use of flesh-foods poisons the body and leads to early senility and death, and an enormous amount of technical and popular literature has been produced in European languages on the subject. The economic reasons are plain; far more vegetable food can be produced from land when it is brought under the plough, than when it is left as a mere grazing ground for animals meant for consumption. But there are certain geographical conditions under which this argument gets reversed—for instance in jungle tracts, and in such mountainous places where agricultural operations on any decent scale are impossible, but there is plenty of grazing, it is inevitable that if men live there, they cannot but eat flesh. Then again proximity to the sea, or to tanks and rivers, where fish abound, fish as food cannot but form part of an economic dietary. It would be folly to waste so much good food. Even Manu could not help realising this fact. He begins with out and out condemning fish as food, on the theological ground that as fish are omnivourous, a person who eats fish has eaten things which he should never have. (He might as well on similar grounds have prohibited vegetable foods seeing that these draw their life from manures which are not especially holy or inviting food-stuffs for humanity). He however permits persons living in places where fish abound to include them in their dietary, and as a matter of fact nearly all the various Brahmana communities of Upper India are flesh and fish eaters.

The argument from Theology is very ancient. It arose out of the belief in an indwelling soul, alike in man, in beast and in vegetable, in short in all that showed life and growth. But this doctrine had not taken such firm hold of the Hindu of the Vedic and Epic days as to turn him into a vegetarian. Flesh-eating to them was something quite normal. In the Vedic days, even beef had not become wholly proscribed. We find Yajnavalkya and other great Rishis relishing it as food (Shatapatha Brahmana III, 1, 2, 21, and various Grihya Sutras). Even in marriage ceremonies and at funeral ceremonies the killing of bulls and cows formed a regular item, (Rig Veda X. 85, 13 X, 16, 7,). But the cow was also regarded as sacred (Rig Veda VIII, 101, 15, 16, Shukla Yajur Veda IV, 19, 20, Atharva Veda, X, 10, XII, 4, 5,). and not to be killed, *aghnya.* She was identified with earth or Aditi. This seeming self-contradiction has been made a mess of by European Sanskritists as well as by Hindus. Neither has been able to penetrate to the core of the thought which resulted in the sacrifice of a sacred animal, and the partaking of its flesh. I need not labor the point that these animals were not used habitually as food, but were so used only on special occasions. The case of King Rantideva with its unbelievably exaggerated numbers of cattle—running into thousands, so as to form a river of blood—killed daily for his kitchen, seems to be a very isolated case and we need not go into it here.

The idea underlying such a theory and practice has very convincingly been brought out by Dr. Harrison in her book *Themis*, where she has described the Greek ritual of the sacrifice of a Bull. She says the sacred animal was sacrificed and eaten so that his power may be communicated to his worshippers. The idea of the sacramental bread and wine or flesh and blood of Christ seems to be the same. Further light on this whole question of Sacrifices is to be found in " The Golden Bough " of Dr. Fraser. The horse-sacrifice too, which was a privilege of a Ruling Chief, does not mean that horse flesh was habitually used as food, but that under certain well-defined magic rituals, the eating of it brought special ' power ' to the King.

To go back to the theological reason against flesh diet ; it is purely animistic and based on the good old law of retribution, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth ; one who eats the flesh of any animal will also have to submit to be eaten by that animal. (See the story of Bhrigu Varuni in the Shatapatha XI, 6, 1, 1, etc., also Jaiminiya Brahmana 1, 42—44 ; Aitareya Aranyaka II, 1, 2). This doctrine is widely current in modern India.

The humanitarian doctrine of Ahimsa is first voiced by the great Bhishma, when he says that there is no food equal to flesh foods—we have to remember that he was a Kshatriya and so habituated to flesh foods—but as it could not be obtained without the slaughter of animals and causing pain to sentient creatures, therefore it should be avoided. The Jaina and Bauddha standpoints are too well-known to require more than a mere passing reference; though by a strange irony of fate the nations to-day professing Buddhism,—Mongolians, Tibetans, Chinese, Burmese, Siamese, Ceylonese and Japanese—are one and all flesh-eaters.

This humanitarian crusade against flesh eating and its necessary precursor, the killing of animals, has gathered great volume in the Western countries. The brutalisation and degradation of those who have to do the gruesome butcher's work (which cultured people who are too fine to perform, but not too fine to profit by) is being dragged into the light of the day, and efforts are being made to humanise these fierce, cruel natures and abolish their ghastly trade in favour of others more humane.

A quotation from Thoreau's "Walden" p. 213 is so apt, though lengthy, that I put it in here:—

"Beside, there is something essentially unclean about this diet and all flesh, and I began to see where house work commences, and whence the endeavour, which costs so much, to wear a tidy and respectable appearance each day, to keep the house sweet and free from all ill odours and sights. Having been my own butcher and scullion, and cook, as well as the gentleman for whom the dishes were served up, I can speak from an unusually complete experience. The practical objection to animal food in my case was its uncleanness, and, besides, when I had caught, and cleaned, and cooked, and eaten my fish, they seemed not to have fed me essentially. It was insignificant and unnecessary, and cost more than it came to. A little bread or a few potatoes would have done as well, with less trouble and filth. Like many of my contemporaries, I had rarely for many years used animal food, or tea, or coffee, etc., not so much because of any ill effects which I had traced to them, as because they were not agreeable to my imagination. The repugnance to animal food is not the effect of experience but is an instinct. It appeared more beautiful to live low and fare hard in many respects; and though I never did so, I went far enough to please my imagination. I believe that every man who has ever been earnest to preserve his higher or poetic faculties in the best condition has been particularly inclined to abstain from animal food, and from much food of any kind. It is a significant fact, stated by entomologists,—I find it in Kirby and Spence,—that "some insects in their perfect state, though furnished with organs of feeding, make no use of them," and they lay it down as "a general rule, that almost all insects in this state eat much less than in that of larvæ. The voracious caterpillar when transformed into a butterfly,"… "and the gluttonous maggot when become a fly," content themselves with a drop or two of honey or some other sweet liquid. The abdomen under the wings of the butterfly still represents the larva. This is the tit-bit which tempts his insectivorous fate. The gross feeder is a man in the larva state, and there are whole nations in that condition, nations without fancy or imagination, whose vast abdomens betray them."

"It is hard to provide and cook so simple and clean a diet as will not offend the imagination; but this, I think, is to be fed when we feed the body; they should both sit down at the same table. Yet perhaps this may be done. The fruits eaten temperately need not make us ashamed of our appetites, nor interrupt the worthiest pursuits. But put an extra condiment into your dish, and it will poison you. It is not worth the while to live by rich cookery. Most men would feel ashamed if caught preparing with their own hands precisely such a dinner, whether of animal or vegetable food, as is everyday prepared for them by others. Yet, till this is otherwise we are not civilised, and, if gentlemen and ladies, are not true men and women. This certainly suggests what change is to be made. It may be vain to ask why the imagination will not be reconciled to flesh and fat. I am satisfied that it is not. Is it not a reproach that man is a carnivorous animal? True, he can and does live, in a great measure, by preying on other animals; but this is a miserable way, as any one who will go to snaring rabbits, or slaughtering lambs, may learn, and he will be regarded as a benefactor of his race who shall teach man to confine himself to a more innocent and wholesome diet. Whatever my own practice may be, I have no doubt that it is a part of the destiny of the human race, in its gradual improvement, to leave off eating animals, as surely as the savage tribes have left off eating each other when they came in contact with the more civilised."

The inseparably intimate connection between mind and body does not need much laboring. As the Chhandogya Upanishad has it, आहारशुद्धौ सत्वशुद्धिः "from purity of food comes purity of thought and action." It was a clear perception of this fact that made the Gita divide foods and drinks into three categories, corresponding to three temperaments. According as any one wished to develop either the Sattva, the Rajas, or the Tamas qualities or was of that nature, he would use the foods suited to conserve or develop that particular nature. This is much more logical than universal prohibition. Of course one must not conclude from this that mere control of food is enough to produce the condition of a Sattva, Rajasa or Tamasa personality; it is only one of the means and helps towards such.

The evils of drug and drink habits are terrible in their consequences, and are recognised to be such in their saner moments even by those unfortunates who have fallen victims to them. The first horrible thing about them is that they are habit-forming in their effects; *i.e.*, they exercise such a fascination over their victims that they speedily become *habitues*, and no amount of suffering or persuasion seems to have power to break them of the obsession. Secondly, they imperiously demand an ever larger and larger dose, and few human wills are strong enough not to succumb to the persistent craving. The man and still more the woman once in the grip becomes a physical and a social wreck. No Governments which make money by their Excise policy, through the ruin of the lives of their subjects deserve to be called civilised. The only proper course for a Government which exists for the benefit of the people and not for their exploitation is unflinching prohibition, except in cases of medical prescription. It is unfortunate that British Fiscal policy and English education should be responsible for an ever increasing amount of drunkenness: and it is more unfortunate that this drunkenness does not bring with it the same amount of social odium and condemnation among the higher castes that it used to do formerly.

The Magistrate should remember that no man who has by means of drugs enfeebled his will should ever be held irresponsible for this wilful destruction of the most important human faculty and no court of law should mete out anything but severe punishment to such creatures, uninfluenced by untimely pleas of "humanity." Intoxication should be regarded not as an extenuating but as an aggravating circumstance. Opium and ganja smoking sadhus (monks) should also obviously not be regarded as spiritual persons. The people must give up their present attitude of reverence towards such rascals and treat them as blasphemous desecrators of holy things, refuse them food and shelter, and hound them out of their towns and villages; then only will the nuisance cease.

A few words are necessary here on the subject of the abominable practices inculcated in the majority of Tantras, which under the guise of making for salvation, let loose the aboriginal instincts of man which have been brought under control through the efforts of countless generations of teachers of religion and of morality. A very riot of excesses is not merely permitted but vigorously encouraged. Men in all stations of life, from the richest to the poorest, but generally of the higher castes only, and even then largely from the Brahmana caste are to be found all over the country practising most secretly these abominations. Among Europeon Christians also exist such devilish fraternities, and the rites are known as the Black Mass. One outspoken Sanskrit verse about these creatures occurs in a late work.

अन्तः शाक्ताः बहिः शैवाः सभा मध्ये च वैष्णवाः ।
नानारूपधराः कौलाः विचरन्ति महीतले ॥

"In their heart of hearts Shaktas, outwardly Shaivas, but professing Vaishnavaism in the gatherings of the respectabilities such are the Kaulas who roam the world under various and many disguises."

No Brahmana or Vaishya may dare to drink publicly. Even the Kshatriya has to be careful. The penances prescribed, if so much as a drop of liquor touches even the body, are exceedingly harsh, and for one who has actually drunk, the expiatary process, consisting as it did of drinking molten lead, meant death. So secret societies came into existence where all foul appetites could be indulged in to the full, under cover of the worship of the ten Mahavidyas—

it would be the literal truth to call these, Maha-Avidyas, (The Great Darknesses)—through the agency of what are known shortly as the five Makaras. These five are (1) Mudra, gesticulations in twenty-four different ways by various interlacings of the fingers; this might be regarded as a gesture language spelled out with the help of these twenty-four interlacings, which are the alphabets of the language; (2) Maithuna, sex conjugation; (3) Madya, intoxicant spirits; (4) Matsya, fish, and (5) Mamsa, flesh. What can result from such shameless depravity, but nervous breakdowns and bestiality of character? Even Buddhism in its Tibetan form with its worship of Tara has not escaped the taint. In India while no Province is free from it, Kashmir being an ancient centre, it is the Bangali, the Maithila, the Maharashtra and the Tamil, who are more addicted to these 'worships' than the other races. Kamakhya, on the borders of Eastern Bengal, with its temple to the female generative organ is the most notorious seat of such worship. In Puri also this Bhairavi-Chakra worship in connection with Vimaladevi is carried on. There used to be two such rival centres in Benares also and both most likely still flourish. In the Madras Presidency there are also many such centres.

There is a second kind of Shakti worship known as the Dakshina marga or the Right-hand path, in contradiction to the above but it is very tame, all the methods of the Vama marga or the Left-hand path eing used with this basic difference that the five

M's are represented by objects and practices which cannot lead to shameful orgies. Thus, Madya is milk or honey kept in a copper vessel, or cocoanut water kept in a bell-metal vessel; Mansa is wheat, the pulses (gram, lentils, *masha*), garlic; Matsya is fried sesamum seeds, red pot herb मरसेक्रासाग, Kushmanda, lemon, Mudra is roasted grains, lawa; Maithuna the commingling of अपराजितपक्ष (female organ) with करवीरपुष्प (male organ) flowers, and musk, sandal and *kumkum*. It is most likely that the above was invented merely as a cover to hide the real article from uninitiated curiosity.

There is a third kind also, but it is scarcely a worship for it interprets the five M's in an allegorical, mystical psychological sense.

न मदयम्माधवोमदयम् मदयं शक्ति रसोद्भवम् ।
सुषुम्ना शंखिनी मत्स्यम् मुद्रा उन्मन्यनुत्तमा ॥

Madya is the nectar flowing from the Sahasrara chakra in the head; Mansa is shiva or the 'purified' Atma, Maithuna is the mingling of the पराशक्ति with the Atma; Matsya is the highest लय produced after the killing of the two animals पुण्य and पाप with the sword of ज्ञान; Mudra is one of the various yogic postures of meditation. This further development came about to meet the "excruciating" need to make the thing thoroughly respectable in the eyes of lynx-eyed society and cover the practices under an impenetrable cloak of professions of the highest aspirations.

Allied to this Shakti-worship and proceeding out of it, there is a still deeper depth of degradation, namely, the euphemistically named Aghora-pantha. As the Persian word Mehtar meaning great, is now applied to the lowly scavenger, so has this 'path,' pantha, been called 'Aghora' the non-terrible, the non-hideous, because of its being so ghoulish. The man by the time he has qualified himself to become an Aghora-panthi or Kapalika, the name by which he is known in Classical Samskrit has completely lost all sense of right and wrong and shame, and is no more a human creature but a fearsome and abominable ghoul. He dances in cremation grounds, his ornaments are bones, his food corpses and excreta, and his drinking vessel a human skull. He believes he has become a favorite and an especial disciple of Mahadeva by mimicking the gross Puranic descriptions given of Him. What flattery more telling and delicate than that of sincere and whole-hearted imitation? In fact he has gone one better. All the country side is in mortal dread of such a creature and in its pitiable ignorance and fright regards him as a great and a holy being possessed of unimaginable superhuman powers. If these poor simple folk could but once realise that the insufferable creature should be treated to a taste of the lash tied up to the nearest tree till sense returned into his befogged brain, and not dealt with as a godlike creature possessed of miraculous powers, the country would be spared the sight of such awful and heart-breaking desecration of religion. What could be more deadly in its corruption than the noblest applied to meanest ends.

"Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.''

A life-like description of this hideous nightmare of a creature, his doings and followings, is given by Bana in his Harsha. Charita,* a work of the early years of the 7th Century A. C. It shows that 1,300 years have wrought no change in the practices of these devils in human shape nor in the attitude of the people towards these human hyenas. There is a matha belonging to this order in Benares, the head of which is known as Baba Keenaram. A festival is held every year, when all the prostitutes of the city gather there.

This systematic indulgence of foul appetites under the garb of religion and philosophy should be assayed at its true value and no mercy shown to those wretches who practise such abominations. The very name which Classical Sanskrit has given to it, of the Vama-marga, the left hand, sinister and evil path, should be a warning to the public. Hindus should always remember the clear teaching of Shri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita, that nothing which in any way is immoral or brutalising can ever belong to true religion, and that only that person's wisdom is wisdom whose senses are under full control.

*** By the way this great Emperor Harsha-Vardhana was not a Kshatriya, nor even a Brahmana, but a Vaishya, according to Hiouen-Thsang, who visited his Court, and was treated with great honour by the Emperor.**

The work of Bana above referred to deserves to be much more widely known than it is for the light it throws on the social conditions of those days. It would be a revelation to most of our glib preachers of Swaraj, how in those blessed days of "Swaraj," *the people* that is the wealth producers of the community—the trader, the artisan, the tiller of the soil—as against the parasitical wealth consumers—the military and sacerdotal castes, were ground into dust and absolutely no regard was paid to their sufferings. The work shows up the sad strange contrast of the magnifiçence of the Court and the ignoble wretched lives of the people and the inhuman administration. To be locked up in the King's jail was a fate a thousand times worse than swift death. Human life was so cheap and so uncertain that we read of the court nobles hawking about human flesh as a means of warding off the illness of the King, to which he succumbed. Such was the frightful ignorance, superstition and tyranny of the nobles and priests of pre-Musalman India; what the condition of the people must have been may safely be left to the reader's imagination. For the sufferings of the people in Moslem India, one has only to turn to the pages of Manuchchis "Mogal India" to see how hard was their lot, to say nothing about a host of other works dealing with the period.

Before concluding this thorny subject of intoxicants and passing on to the next, it may not be amiss to dwell for a few minutes on the underlying causes which have made all regulations against their use, whether religious, social, or administrative, almost of no force against the craving. A strange verse left uneliminated from our present text of Manu though the last quarter of it shows almost certainly the hand of an ascetic-minded tamperer, represents the attitude of the average normal man. The verse runs

न मांसभक्षणे दोषो न मद्ये नचमैथुने ।
प्रवृत्तिरेषा भूतानां निवृत्तिस्तु महाफला ॥

" There is neither harm nor sin (dosha means both) in eating flesh, in drinking wine, in cohabitation. It is natural to all human beings, but (it is a very big 'but') the abstaining from them all conduces to great merit." A common-sense interpretation of this ancient verse which is certainly not less than 2200 years old and is quite likely some centuries older, would be, that harm comes not by moderate indulgence of the animal appetites, but by over indulgence, which over indulgence rightly calls forth reprobation from the community.

In all regulations the difficulty is how to preserve the golden mean of well-regulated, abstemious, medical, use of such potent and dangerous things, on the one side, and total prohibition on the other. It is on this rock that all religious, administrative or social regulations have come to grief. Sleep is as much an inhibitory force as alcohol, but would any one say it was vicious to sleep ? The real danger begins everywhere in intemperance, in overdoing a thing, in that lack of the power of self-restraint, which tells each one separately how far he may go with profit. By such lack, even a life of religion when it becomes so engrossing as to produce neglect of duty to parents, to wife, to children, to the community, deservedly brings down reprobation from the community. As the craving for emotional excitation, for will elation, for intense experience, is a fundamental part of human nature, it must be satisfied at all costs. To deny opportunities for their realisation is to bestialise man. But he will not be denied. If not by drinks and drugs, then by gambling and betting, mysticism and superstition, sexual perversions and excesses. The two indispensable conditions for the control of the drink demon are firstly the building up of such a strong social sense against it that even secret *misuse* of them would not be tolerated, but would bring down inevitable and instantaneous punishment irrespective of the social might of the sinner. It is a necessary preliminary to this condition of affairs, that the religious stigma attaching to their even medical use, as in Hinduism and in Islam should be completely removed. We see that the higher classes in England were as awful drunkards barely a couple of centuries ago as the English lower classes are to-day, but since the latter half of the nineteenth century it has become a matter of great social shame for the higher classes to get drunk, and the vice has practically disappeared.

The second and even more important condition s, that to take the place of these poisonous ways of self-realisation, other means must be provided, which add a permanent value to each such act of self-realisation such as Dancing, Music, Drama, Poetry. This of course means that *education*, and not mere instruction in the three Rs, must become wide-spread. For it is the lower classes of all castes who most need to be trained to live higher lives, and it is they—and they come very largely from the lower castes—who fall victims to the drink habit. As it is, the excise policy of the Government has flooded the country with cheap and poisonous liquors manufactured in the West, and has established grogshops everywhere, throwing irresistible temptation in the way of the ignorant and weak-willed. As the labouring classes must have drink for a long time yet to come, the proper thing is that while such awful drugs, as cocaine, morphia, ganja and charas are totally prohibited, and foreign liquors subjected to very heavy excise duties, (imported cigarettes should be included in such a duty) country liquors like toddy and those manufactured from Mahua, whose percentage of alcohol is very low, and bhang should be more lightly taxed than those. Penalise the strong and deleterious intoxicants and, while not encouraging the milder beverages, so shape the policy that people would substitute these for those, and gradually come to give these up also.

We come now to what may be regarded as methods of keeping the 'inner bodies' pure and efficient. Whatever sullies the physical body repurcusses on the finer ones and so sullies them too. Such agents fall naturally into two groups—one theological, the other moral and philosophical. The theological side is represented by the rules of ablutions and segregations on the occasions of births and deaths among relatives etc., and in the performance of certain natural functions of the physical body, and many other occasions, like eclipses etc., too numerous to be enumerated here. The moral and philosophical side, which alone is the true side, is dealt with in the Smritis, but more so in what is known as the prasthanatraya—namely the Brahma Sutra, the Gita, and the Upanishads; also, as an auxilliary, the Yoga Sutras.

Physical waters will not wash clean the impalpable heart sullied by ages of self-centred desires and actions. It is love, and knowledge, bhakti and jnana, fructifying in action, karma, which alone have the power to cleanse and purify the inner souls. *That which does this is religion.* The Fine Arts, especially Music for persons who are not tone-deaf, is a splendid training for producing inner harmony and developing Soul-power. The greatest Rishi was Narada, and he was the greatest musician. The 'great god' Mahadeva is the King of Dancers. All bhaktas know and utilise the potent power of Music, both vocal and instrumental. It affects and intensifies every mood and emotion. With rare Psychological insight has Keats, the English poet, delineated in wonderful language this power of Music, to exalt or to debase.

SHANTIS.

These are propitiatory ceremonies very much in favour with the Hindus. They are unknown to Vedic India and are the ever multiplying product of the days when Astrology came to dwell amongst us. Another factor in their birth and multiplication has been the submergence of Vedism in the surrounding superstitions of the non-Vedic tribes, which were being steadily evangelized into it. Tantras, Puranas, and astrological works are the quarry from which have been drawn the materials for the addition of a very paying trade to the fast diminishing income of the Brahmana from the earlier Sacrificial sources. If Manu, Yajnyavalkya or Parashara came to life they would be astounded at the number and character of the innumerable Shantis, propounded in scores of Nibandhas on the subject and the mental condition of the believers in them. The accidental blowing out of a lamp, the fall of a lizard, the occurrence of an unpleasant dream, the sitting of a vulture on a house, or the entrance of a crow into one etc., etc., all are subjects for a Shanti ritual, a 'pacification,' a warding off of portended evil the main item in which is substantial gifts to the priests.

VRATAS

Primitive Man did not deny himself food at the command of his spiritual preceptors in the hope of gaining religious merit thereby. He fasted only when he was compelled to do so by dire necessity. This fasting under necessity was either total or partial, prolonged or of short duration, restricted to certain kinds of food or an avoidance of some kinds, uncooked or cooked and the permutations and combinations of these various methods. He thus had learnt to take thought of the morrow, to economise his resources by either limiting the quantity, or restricting the variety, or subsisting on cheaper, or more easily procurable articles. He at the same time and equally involuntarily discovered the Psychic effect of fasts. Such is the humble basis of Fasts over which priesthoods of every clime and every time have upraised a complicated and imposing superstructure enmeshed in gross superstition. The gradual evolution of the system from its earlier Vedic simplicity to its ever increasing later Tantric complexity is easy to trace. We see to-day the total neglect of Shruti and Smriti and a complete adoption of Puranas, Tantras, and other sectarian works as authorities on this question of vows, Fasts. From the fourteenth century onwards scores of special Digests dealing with these, their name, their proper days and the complex rituals for observing them in the correct orthodox ways, have been compiled; till now the number of these might be practically said to be as many as there are days in the year. The most famous of the Vratas is the fortnightly Ekadashi of the Vaishnavas and the annual Shivaratri of the Shaivas. Unfortunately for the physical and spiritual health of the people, the Ekadashi from being a day of real fasting and of religious meditations, has been converted by the majority of its observers into a day of gluttonous feasting on all sorts of indigestible foods different from those taken on other days. The Jainas out-do us in the matter of severity and length of their Fasts—some of these extend to 90 days, with only a little buttermilk allowed to sustain life. The cult of fasting is coming into vogue in the West also among the various Protestant sects of Christians under medical auspices. The Roman Catholics and the Greek Church continue to keep up the practice of theological Fasts. The Musalman too has his month's semi-fast at the Ramazan, something like the Dhanusha-masa (bow-month) of the Vaishnava Hindu, when he offers food to his god and partakes of it afterwards (prasada) before the rising of the Sun in the month of Pausha. Both these ways are very deleterious to health, theology ignoring or being ignorant of sanitary considerations. Sir J. G. Fraser, in his monumental work " The Golden Bough " has shown by adducing numberless instances from the practice of savage tribes, that the attempts to read medical considerations into these observances is wholly wrong, and that they are the products of mere Theology and superstition.

In this connection a few words may be said about what is known as the pancha-maha-yajnya-vrata: because of the latter-day attempts to revive this practically longdead ritual; and the ignorance of its real nature prevalent among its revivalists. This consists of (1) Svadhyaya or Brahma-yajnya, *i.e.*, the daily study of the Vedas, which has come to mean actual practice (and that too restricted to a very few old-world Brahmanas) the rapid mumbling of the first sentence of each of the four Samhitas (2) Deva-yajna, or Agnihotra. *i.e.*, the sacrifice to the gods by means of oblations in the consecrated fire, which has come to mean in actual practice, (and that too restricted to a very few old-world Brahmanas) the putting of a few pinches of the viands on a live charcoal before commencing to eat. (3) Pitri-yajnya or Tarpana, *i.e.*, oblations of water to the Manes by taking it up in one's hollowed out joined palms, with sesamum seeds, and pouring it out to the iteration of Mantras. Actually this is reserved for the Pitri-paksha the fortnight devoted to the Manes in the month of Ashvin; even the untouchable Chamar then does it on one day and calls it pitar-saundan (4) Vaishvadeva-bali, or Bhuta-yajna, the sacrifice to the Vishve-devah, through the feeding of the lower creatures; in practice, it means the putting out for the ants, the crows etc., a few pinches from the food, by a few people. (5) Manushya-yajnya, or Atithi-pujana, sacrifice for a guest, feeding him before eating one self.

A great deal of misplaced ignorant emotionalism is spent in pointing out the beauties of this last sacrifice. It is conveniently forgotten that *none* but a Brahmana can be the Atithi; not only in a Brahmana household; but even in a Kshatriya or Vaishya household. It is emphatically *not* a general humanitarian rule about feeding the hungry, of keeping an open house for *all* comers. In what light even a Kshatriya was held by Manu would be made plain to anyone reading verses 110-112 of Chapter III. An unbiassed student cannot help being shocked by the unenviable light these throw on the self-righteousness of the priest and the disgraceful treatment of the Kshatriya, of course the still lower castes, the Vaishya, the Shudras, the Vratyas, the hybrids, were meted out worse social treatment.

This five-fold vow was primarily meant for the Brahmana householder as a daily expiation ritual for the five-fold daily 'sin' committed in every household, through the use of the cooking fire, the broom, the grinding stone, the pestle and mortar, and finally the water-pot; because there was destruction of life in the working of these five indispensable things for a household (*vide* Manu III 68, 71). This doctrine of Ahimsa, of humanitarian revolt from causing pain and death, of almost the pathological nature of the Jaina conscience on the subject, would seem very strange in the mouths of the advocates of Vedic sacrifices and of flesh foods, if it were not remembered that there was at the back of it some magical superstition. No intrinsic positive merit is assigned to the proper performance of this penitential ceremonial in any of the recognised books; it is only in expiation.

UTSAVAS

There are numberless festivals in honor of the various gods and goddesses, some local, some general, at stated periods, and also for certain planetary conjunctions detailed in astrological works. Some of the most important ones are—the Holi, the Dipamalika, the Vijaya-dashami, the Raksha-bandhana, the Vasanta-panchami, the Rama-navami, the Krishna-janmashtami, the Makarasankranti, the Tija, the Gangaura etc. etc. Then there are the six-yearly half-Kumbha and the twelve-yearly full Kumbha gatherings which are peripatetic affairs and bring together an enormous concourse of pilgrims and especially of all the ascetic orders of Sadhus of every persuasion, from the stark-naked military order of the Nagas, all physique and no brains, to that of the highly learned Sannyasins of the orders of Shankara, Ramanuja and and Madhva. The Kumbha is the Jupiter cycle of 60 years divided into periods of 12 each. The year 1918 was the Kumbha year round the ice-bound Manas-sarovar lake at the foot of the Kailas mountain in Tibetan territory. The circumambulation of this lake is 28 miles. The way to it lies *via* Almora and Pilibhit. There are 8 Buddhist monasteries round it. The Maharaja of Bhotan also owns three monasteries on the slopes of Kailas. Sherring's "Western Tibet" and Sven Hedin's "Trans-Himalaya" give full descriptions of the routes and the place. But this Kumbha is very little known because of the extraordinary hardships of the way. It is attended only by a select circle of Hindu and Buddhist pilgrims. The four places where the full and half Kumbhas are held now are, Hardwar, Prayaga, Nasika and Ujjain.

These are occasions when the much-needed rest from the daily grind of life is afforded to the masses, and their grey and drab life illumined by the all too rare rays of frolic and fun and joyful emotions, that give zest to life. They are also occasions of some sort of congregational worship and devotion, which otherwise is wholly wanting in the markedly individualistic character of the Hindu religion. These help to bring people of all castes and all classes, of diverse tempers, characters, and conditions of life into some touch with and understanding of other aspects of life than their own, and so are a markedly educative force and deserve whole-hearted encouragement from the community and from the government. The English-educated Hindu is foolish in turning up his nose at these manifestations of the emotional life of the people. He should enter strenuously into their spirit.

YATRAS.

Of pilgrimages there is no end. The whole country is dotted with shrines, sacred pools, heavenly rivers, and cloud-kissing mountain peaks. The most important of the holy places are those known as the four *dhamas*—namely—Kedarnatha and Badarinatha in the North, Puri or Jagannath on the East Coast, Rameshwar on the South Coast and Dwarka on the West Coast. Then there are the seven *puris* or sacred towns—namely, Kashi, Kanchi, Avantika, (Ujjain) Mayavati (Hardwar), Prayaga, (the King of sacred places) and Mathura. To perform a pilgrimage to these places made a person Mukta. There are some splendid temples in the Madras Presidency, the Madura temple being the finest. Vithoba in Pandharpur in the Bombay Province is another famous place of pilgrimage. So are Amaranatha in the heart of the snowy Himalayas in the Kashmir State; Padmanabha on the South-West Coast in Travancore; Pashupatinath in Nepal. It was an education to go wandering from place to place with open eyes, imbibing the beauty of Nature and of the stately fanes, and studying the manners and customs of peoples, all Hindus, differing, with every new place from one's own. If properly utilised these are the finest prophylactics against a narrowness of vision and bigoted intolerance. Some of the finest temples are in such distant ancient Hindu Colonies as Java, Cochin China, Cambodia, built more than twelve hundred years ago.

DANA.

This is a factor of the most cardinal importance in the life of every Hindu. Dana—alms-giving, charity, gifts and presents to priests—is the most judicious investment possible for the saving of one's soul. Whatever he might be, whatever he may have done, or left undone, this Dana is so powerful in its effects that it rights every wrong and makes good every omission. The only other weapon of righteousness is the name of the Lord, and that is even more potent. But that is another story. Here we are concerned only with Dana, gifts to Brahmanas. A few sentences on the Hindu Theory of Property are necessary here. Without some information on this point, it will not be possible to grasp fully this question of gifts, charities, endowments. The Brahmana is the sole owner of all this wide Earth and all its products. But as his function is a life of religion he cannot undertake the administration of the State, for it would interefere with his special vocation. So he has given it to a class of administrators, whose sole function is to guard the property from internal and external disturbances and to levy taxes for the purpose of meeting the expenses incidental to such work; and whatever remains over in the treasury is kept in trust for the Brahmana. The Ruler is a ruler because the Brahmana wants him as his agent and not because he has any *rights* of his own. He is known as Rajanya or Kshatriya. Farther, a class of men are wanted who would develop the State. The people who did this were given the name of Vaishya and it was their business to see to husbandary, to cattle, and to trade. A third class of men was no less imperatively needed, namely, the labourer pure and simple, the people on whom this burden was thrown were given the name of Shudra, in modern vernacular, coolie. These people had no right to anything beyond a mere subsistence allowance, and if they were so unfortunate as to become rich, their wealth was open to the cupidity of any and every Brahmana. The Manu Smriti is very clear on this point of a Shudra having no remedy against a Brahmana who chose to annex his property. The Kshatriya and the

Vaishya, though only Trustees and agents could not be dealt with so cavalierly. But all the same they were expected to meet as far possible all the extravagant whims of the 'sacred folk' whose "managers" they were. The Brahmana took only what was his own, it was merely the rendering back to the owner what was in Deposit. So it was scarcely a case of charity, or gift, it was literally only bare justice—discharge of duty, something which was due. But as doing justice is not an easy thing and in such cases involves some pain and some self-denial, this giving was regarded as an act by which merit accrued. This bribe was necessary to make them part with the wealth under their safe keeping gracefully. Of course no Shudra could give Dana, or a Brahmana receive it from him.

That such a theory was not always a mere theory to be discussed and amplified in books, but carried out in actual, real, every day life, whenever opportunities permitted is well brought out by the existence and working of the Feudatory State of Travancore. The owner of the State is not the human Maharaja but the God Padmanabha, (lotus-naveled) who lives in the splendid temple in his capital Trivandrum. The ruler, one of whose titles is Padmanabha Das, the slave of Padmanabha, rules as the agent of the God, and a very large portion of the revenues is spent in feeding the illiterate and vicious Malayali, and Tamil Bhu-suras, (gods of the Earth) who are the vicegerents of the God in Heaven. It is a sight to make one shudder to see the numerous *achchis*—the Malayali word for the 'handmaids' of this horde of over-fed Brahmanas coolly coming in after their lords have been fed to repletion, and carry away the remains which are always more than ample for their needs.

The above will now help us to realise what was at the back of the minds of the writers on Dharma Shastra, when they said, that the duty of the Kshatriya and the Vaishya was three-fold only, namely, study of the Vedas, performance of sacrifices and gifts to Brahmanas. The former two were compoundable and were in the majority of cases compounded by farther gifts. The duty of the Brahmana was six-fold. He alone could officiate as a priest at Sacrifices, he alone could teach the Vedas, he alone could receive gifts; the other three being the same as those of the Kshatriya and the Vaishya. The Shudra, that is the bulk of the population, had no standing in such a scheme.

It will be seen then, that Dana was not so much a gift, a charity, a mere humanitarian duty of generally clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, healing the sick, teaching the ignorant, but rather a highly specialised form of legal duty, and to be regarded as a privilege, because the person making the Dana vouchsafed an opportunity of discharging his debt justly. We can now understand those monumental examples of the virtue of Dana, Karna, Nala, Shibi and others, who gave away their all even to the extent of their lives. Dana stood on the same footing, one might say, as a gambling debt. It was a point of honor to pay it whatever other injustice it may involve, even though no Court of law would ever enforce the claim.

Practically however, charitable gifts, when not extorted by the fear of a curse, as they are still, in the 20th century, in India, have always been used as a salve to an uneasy conscience, or a bribe for gaining some spiritual advantage. The teaching about पात्रे देयम् "give only to the deserving," has been completely ignored in practice. A further gambling element has been brought into the matter, by saying that the gift is in the name of Krishna and not for the donor; thus the accruing merit becomes eternal, inexhaustible in its effects.

Gifts may be divided into categories according to the purpose they are intended to serve. They may be due to religious emotion or civic sentiment; they may be for the benefit of a particular individual or for a community or corporation. The building and endowing of temples, or of Mathas, or of Sattras for only Brahmanas, or for Vedic schools etc., come under the designation of Religious Endowments. The building and endowing of Dharmshalas, wells, tanks, groves, Hospitals, etc., come under the designation of Public Charities, for it is all meant for the public at large and not restricted to the use of the sacerdotal caste. Gifts of land, houses, goods, cash etc., to individual Brahmanas is individual religious gift;

while the distribution of clothes and foods, by which only the lower castes benefit as a rule, is individual public charity.

The Hindu law-books dealing with the subject number scores, and some of them are quite bulky. None of these has been translated into English or any vernacular, and but a few only printed. Not till these works, on Pratishtha, Purta, Utsarga, etc., are printed and translated, would it be possible to deal out justice in the modern law Courts in the light of Hindu law. At present decisions are mostly arrived at in the light of English law.

In present day India the naked unashamed barter of the days of Vedic India between the sacrificer and his god—*Dehi me*, give unto me, *Dadami-te*, I give unto Thee,—is no less rampant. That is to say, the worshipper gives something to his god, and the god gives him something in return ; thus, the sacrificers make oblations to Indra, and Indra bestows rain in return. Under official guidance and patronage, our charities are taking the shape of Hospitals, Hostels, Education, Famine Relief etc., for these are pleasing to our British rulers, and they bring in return, titles and decorations, which are more valued in this iron age of material civilisation and the all-embracing power of Machinery.

The ever present need of charity for the relief of distress makes one reflect whether the Law of Property is really equitable which allows of the concentraion, in a few hands, of land and of money, to the exclusion of the vast bulk of the people, turning 95 p.c. or more of the population into mere labourers, wage-earners, in reality beggars.

Private property, or ownership to the exclusion of others, is purely a creation of the State. Without manifold safeguarding by the State, in the interests of the individual, property could never have come into existence. Therefore the State has every right so to modify its laws that such glaring inequalities of condition shall be remedied as far as possible, and that every citizen, should get a stake in the country and become a responsible person, instead of remaining a mere 'hand' for the exploitation of multi-millioniares. Until the bulk of the people, the so-called masses as against the microscopic minority of the classes, become private owners, the State will continue to be in the unstable equilibrium of an inverted pyramid, and class wars, capital on one side, labour on the other will continue with all their bitterness, and in fact grow worse and worse, as labour realises more and more its rights, and capital forgets more and more its duties. The Land Laws, the Laws of Bequests and of Inheritance and such other laws as have a bearing on this vital problem, should all be gradually, but systematically so modified that while inequalities must remain, they will not be so hideous and galling as they are at present. Both pauperism in the masses and plethora in the classes, will be banished, making true citizenship possible for every one, and producing a well-balanced, stable, State.

The 'have-nots' of India should agitate steadily and persistently till the laws are so modified that the 'haves' are no longer able to go on adding pile to pile, while keeping the others in durance vile. The legislature must be forced into making the long deferred differentiation between property for *use* and property for *power*. The Brahmanic theory, leading inevitably to parasitism in practice, is in its consequences suicidal not only to the best interests of the State but to the Brahmana's own personal worth.

PRAYASHCHITTA.

This is a cardinal doctrine of the Hindu faith—in fact of every creed—that when any ceremonials ordained thereby to be done in a particular way have not been done, or done wrongly, then the omission or commission must always be atoned for by performing the prescribed penances. This is what is known as doing Prayashchitta, expiation.

It will be seen that there can be no expiation, no penance, for a deliberately thought out, pre-meditated and pre-arranged flouting of the laws and customs of one's community. Expiations are only for lapses due to ignorance, to the overmastering impulses of desire or to carelessness, in short for offences where the *bona fides* of the offender are beyond question. In other cases, only when the inner attitude of rebellion has completely given place to contrition and humility, is expiation possible. In both cases the attitude of the penitent must be that of earnest whole-hearted desire to be put right again, and a firm determination not to be betrayed into another similar 'sin.' But the number of 'sins' is legion, and at every step a person does something or omits to do something, each act or omission entails an expiation. The natural result is that orthodox and unorthodox, all get into a way of making a sneaking sort of peace with religion. We learn in sheer self-preservation, to make terms with our conscience against the infinite complexities and minute regulations fettering our very lives.

The earliest Vedic penances consist in the repetition of suitable Mantras; but by the time the Smritis came to be composed all manner of penances had been invented that decadent priestly ingenuity could give birth to.

" Moreover, if one looks to the offences described by Yajnavalkya and other Smritis, some of which were once considered so impure as to degrade their authors to the servile class, he will see a vast change in practice. Thus, what was once held to be a cause of degradation is often now performed as a matter of course. The selling of milk and ghee, whey and curds, is distinctly one of the noted degrading causes, and yet hundreds of shops throughout the city of Bombay itself are now owned exclusively by Brahmanas, who are still full members of the brotherhood......I regret to add that in some places even in the Mofussil, contracts for selling spirits have been entered into by Brahmanas, and I have known, of instances of such persons sitting in shops to keep accounts; while their Shudra servants were vending the *fire-water*. Surley according to Hindu notions, one can conceive nothing more degrading than such an occupation........The sale of salt is now carried on by the highest class of Brahmanas, whereas according to Yajnavalkya and other Smritis, such a vendor ought to lose his caste and be turned out of the community.........But such is the force of tyrant custom, that these people have remained members of their community; and with the advance of the railways and the spread of Western civilisation among the higher classes, I can hardly conceive the limits to which this practice is likely to be carried on." (Mandlik's Hindu Law).

This writer, himself a high caste Maharashtra Brahamana, of unquestioned orthodoxy, and withal learned in the laws of the West and in his own Hindu Dharma Shastra, also remarks out of the plenitude of his experience that—"A cursory perusal of the third chapter of Yajnavalkya will convince the reader who has the slightest knowledge of Hindu Society as it exists, that Yajnavalkya's penances are now merely nominal caricatures of an ideal society which probably had no existence at any period beyond the mind of the writer of that digest, but which is certainly entirely inapplicable to the Aryan Society as it exists at the present day." In this instance at least he has seen through the wholly artificial character of the law. It is a pity that not only he but many others before and after him fail to see the Utopian character of large portions of the Hindu law and the terrible misery that is being caused to the country by a blind and rigid enforcement of disjointed portions of it by the English Courts of Law. I have dealt with this question more fully in my Introduction to Balambhatti, and need not go farther into details here.

The institution, as was but too natural, has been most grossly abused. Its workers have always been priests. It is they alone who derive monetary and other advantages from its working; so it has been made to subserve their ends with no regard for the righteousness of the occasion. It becomes a concentration of powers in the same hand such as "tyrannies" crave. The functions of the Policeman, the Magistrate and, worse still, the beneficiary of the fine, are all combined in one person; there can be no escape and the unfortunate victim is heavily mulcted. For all sins are compoundable by a money payment.

It is the canonical penal system, brought into being when living religion is petrifying into dead creeds and formularies, and requires external aids to prop up the decaying faith. Its heart is non-progression, blind conservation, and yet, with the tremendous amount of energy locked up in it, owing to the unlimited faith a vast majority of Hindus still repose in it, it could be made into a powerful lever for the progress of India, if only the custodians of the power could be made honest and enlightened enough to use it rightly. It is this *doctrine* of *expiations*, regarded separately from as against its practice, which has preserved the continuity of the Hindu religion by its ubiquitous presence and far-reaching results. But for this, every transgression would have resulted in an irreparable breach, which would have gone on widening continuously, resulting in the ultimate dispersal of the rather loosely-jointed fabric of Hindu Polity. As an instance of effort in the right direction, the Vratyastoma Prayashchitta may be mentioned here. It is fully described in the Tandya Brahmana. It was a fiction invented by the Rishis of old India, who, unlike their later descendants, were not blind to the actualities of life, for the preservation and spread of their hard-won culture among the non-Aryan tribes among whom they came to dwell. It was something like the old Roman system, which under certain conditions granted the privileges of Roman citizenship to non-Romans—thus assimilating them and turning but too probable enemies into staunch supporters.

An instance, most unique in its wide-visioned outlook occurs in Devala. This post-Vedic Smriti alone among the sickening mass of compositions on the subject of expiations had the courage to tackle with a firm grasp, the terrible state of things brought about by foreign invasion. He unhesitatingly 'lays down rules for expiation, or rather simple purification, not only in all those cases where people were forcibly converted to the faith of the conquerors, or their women folk forcibly defiled, or abducted and kept in harems for years and years, but even for those cases where for worldly advantage men of themselves embraced the foreign faith and ate forbidden foods, and women lived in willing adultery and concubinage. These penances, so mild and reasonable, were for the men and the women of all the four castes. But unfortunately for us Hindus this solitary great Rishi's teaching was a cry in the wilderness and his words have gone unheeded to our undoing. Even in the India of to-day the blind unreasoning fury with which the Hindu community assails any transgression whether deliberate or forced is heart-rending to behold. The merciless way in which women who have been raped or betrayed, or men who have crossed the Seas, are treated is very disheartening to the well-wishers of the Hindu cause.

The inability of our immediate ancestors to understand the tremendous significance of the Vratyastoma and especially of Devala's rules, and their virtual repudiation of it, has provided us with an unenviable legacy in the huge masses of Musalman populations in Kashmir, in Sindh, in Punjab, in Eastern Bengal, and other large tracts of India. Be it said to the honor of Dayanand Saraswati, that he alone among our recent leaders had the prescience and courage to face the problem squarely, and reinaugurate the old rite of 'Shuddhi'. The problem was forced on the late Maharaja Ranavira Simha of Kashmir by his soldiers being taken prisoners by the Musalman frontiersmen and forcibly converted to Islam; this struck such terror amongst them that they began to regard frontier-duty as worse than death, till the Maharaja made arrangements to have them readmitted into caste. His Pandits found from the Shastras, the requisite Prayashchitta for the re-admission of converts, which was incorporated into the Dharmashastra-digest compiled by the order of the Maharaja. Unfortunately it remained a dead letter as the Maharaja himself set the bad example of refusing to take water from their hands. Without this ability of expansion through the power of absorption, the life of no nation, however powerful for the time being, can be indefinitely prolonged. Such a narrow and isolated life is foredoomed to early decay —a lesson which is being driven home to us by the irrefutable figures of every recurring decennial census. We are losing steadily while Islam and Christianity are gaining rapidly at our expense, in numbers.

PITRIS.

Before dealing with the subject of Shraddhas, it is necessary to know something about Pitris, Fathers, to whom Shraddhas are offered. Who are the Pitris and how many of them? The answer is enveloped in much obscurity; so much so that Medhatithi, the oldest (about 900 A.D.) and the most authoritative commentator on Manu dismisses the whole subject as an 'Arthavada' (*i.e.*, not strictly true), invented for the bolstering up of Shraddhas. (III—195-196). Nowhere in the Samskrit books is a clear, definite, and uncontradicted statement as to their nature, number, name and function to be met with. There are diverse lists given in different books. They are divided according to caste also, *i.e.*, some of the Pitris belong specially to Brahmanas, others to Kshatriyas, and so on. But this attempt at creating caste-squabbles even among Pitris, like those prevalent in our daily life, has fallen flat, and has been ignored in practice. The followers of each Samhita, irrespective of their caste, are expected to offer the water-oblation to seven classes of Pitris whose names are given in their Snana-sutra. A large consensus of authority points to there being seven classes of these, with many sub-classes. This very fact of the 'sacred' number seven playing such a conspicuous part here as in other similar cases, should show the unreal, artificial nature of the subject. Of these, three are Amurta, formless, and four Murta, having shapes. Yama is their chief. They are progenitors, physical and non-physical. The physical, or Manusha, Pitris are our ancestors, who have given us physical birth, for whom we perform Preta Shraddhas, and whom we invoke in the Nandi-shraddha. The non-physical, or Daiva, Pitris, are the progenitors of the inner, non-material, bodies, emotional, mental and so on. These latter are again said to be subdivided into seven classes. At the time of the daily Sandhyas, oblations of water have to be offered to these. The oblation to the Manusha-pitris is to be offered by only those who have lost their father.

According to Manu the seven classes of Pitris are:—

(1) Soma-sadah, Moon-dwellers, they are the sons of Virata, father of Manu, *i.e.*, Brahma; and are the Pitris of the Sadhyas, a class of minor gods.

(2) Agnishvattah, eaters of burnt-offerings (purodasha.) They are the sons of the Rishi Marichi; and are the Pitris of the gods (Devas.)

(3) Barhi-shadah, sitters on the Kusha grass. They are the sons of the Rishi Atri; and are the Pitris of the Daityas, Danavas, Yakshas, Gandharvas, Uragas, Suparnas, Kinnaras, and Rakshasas. Medhatithi could not resist the temptation of poking fun at these by pointing out, that these are the folk who are the deadly enemies of the fire-cult of Sacrifices.

(4) Soma-pah, drinkers of the Soma liquor These are the sons of the Rishi Bhrigu; and are the Pitris of the Brahmanas.

(5) Havir-bhujah, eaters of cooked offerings. They are the sons of the Rishi Angiras and are the Pitris of the Kshatriyas.

(6) Ajya-pah, drinkers of ghee. They are sons of Pulastya, another son of Brahma; and are the Pitris of the Vaishyas.

(7) Sukalinah, bringers of good times, *i.e.*, enders of those evil Karmas which lead to

birth as Shudras. They are the sons of Vasishtha; and the Pitris of the Shudras. According to the Puranas they are the one hundred sons of Vasishtha that were killed by Vishvamitra, before they had time to become progenitors. In any case, their function is admirable, the only pity is that they have not yet been able to wipe off all that evil Karma which is responsible for the existence of our fifteen crores of low castes to-day.

A second list is also to be found embedded in Manu (III. 199). There the names are:—Agni-dagdha (burnt with fire); Anagni-dagdhah (that is those whose dead bodies were disposed of in other ways than by cremation); Kavyah (from Kavya the Rishis forget to invent Havyah, from Havya, for Havya the offering to the gods and Kavya the offering to the Pitris are inseparable companions); Saumyah (the quiet ones); the Barhi-shadah; and the Agnishvattah; these two have already been described above.

According to the list as given in the Katyayana Snana-sutra, these are (1) Agnishvattah, guardians of the East; (2) Barhishadah, guardians of the South; (3) Ajyapah, guardians of the West; (4) Somapah, guardians of the North (5) Aryamas, guardians of the zenith; (6) Kavyavad-anala, (काव्यवाड्—अनल) guardians of the nadir; (7) Yamah, guardians of the shining regions. Other Snana-sutras, belonging to other Vedas, give still other names, though they all agree in making only seven classes.

As Medhatithi himself has pointed out that these were invented for the purpose of the Shraddha ritual, and serve no other purpose, we need not tarry farther over this question. Acute dialectician and profoundly learned as Medhatithi was, he could not have failed to see that he administered a death-blow to the Shraddha ceremonial, when he asserted that the doctrine of Pitris was only an Arthavada; but possibly he thought it more prudent to leave the drawing of the inevitable deduction to his readers, than to draw it himself for them. Unfortunately a later generation of scholiasts became too cowardly to follow his lead of sturdy independence. One more instance of his inexorable method is too valuable to be left unmentioned. He dismisses the whole of the first chapter of Manu, which describes the process of creation as mere Artha-vada.

SHRADDHAS.

What is a Shraddha? Literally, it is something done with Shraddha; technically, it is an offering of food and drink to one's dead relatives. It is the inner attitude of faith and of love that is the sole criterion, and not the mere external garb in which these have materialised. For the books say that if a person is so poor that he has nothing to offer to the Pitris, he need only stand up, spread out his arms and say so, while offering his heart's devotion. But as with everything else in

Hinduism, this primitive simplicity did not satisfy a later decadent generation hankering after pompous rituals; and with an eye glued to material benefits, the priesthood was not slow to take full advantage of such a mood. There are a very large number of Paddhatis, and Nihandhas dealing very fully with subject. A number of these have been printed also. The ritual however has now become sorely stricken by the steady stream of 'poison' being administered through the triple agency of religious teachers like Swami Dayananda, of English education, whose touch is crumbling the old-world polity, wherever it comes in contact with it, and most potent of all, economic conditions producing a breathless race for even permission to live.

It is only in Bihar and specially Bengal that Shraddha continues to flourish in all its mischievous vigor. In the latter Province it has degenerated into occasion for the most lavish and extravagant expenditure and display, bearing evidence to the vanity of the performer rather than to his Shraddha, faith, a vanity dexterously tickled by the priests, with endless eulogia of the giver of generous gifts.

Broadly speaking, Shraddhas are rites performed with a view to invoke the help of the Pitris on occasions of rejoicings or to help on the pretas to a higher world. The former is called Abhyudayika, or popularly Nandi, because of the Pitris invoked being known as Nandimukhas, the Joyous-faced. These are performed at the beginning of most ceremonies. The latter is called Preta-Shraddha, or Ekoddishta, and is for helping on the Jiva from the moment it leaves the body until it reaches Svarga. Besides these there is the Pratyabdika known also as Varshika, or annual Shraddha, which, though not mentioned in the Sutras, has become universal in modern India. It is performed for only three generations of ancestors. There are many other kinds of Shraddhas; but it is unnecessary to go into the details of all these.

That their number is very large may be seen from the fact that there are ninety-six Parvana Shraddhas, *i.e.*, those performed at some Parva, auspicious occasion; and there are twenty-five Ekoddhishta ones, from Eka, one, *i. e.*, performed in the interests of a single individual.

From the above very brief description it will have been gathered that they are nothing else than magical performances, and their core is not so much love for the dead, as the wish to expedite their passage to the 'other' world, so that they may not remain as ghosts attached to their old environments to trouble the living. The birth of the ritual was coincident with that of the birth and growth of the theories about a soul and its migrations through worlds of tenuous materiality, and its power to obsess the living and make their lives a horrible burden. The practice is of a comparatively recent growth, the very word Shraddha is not to be found in the Samhitas and the Brahmanas. Even in the post-Vedic and the Smriti-periods it was only a very simple affair. With the Tantras it attained its latter-day importance, complexity and luxuriance. The indispensable verse सप्तव्याधा दशार्णेषु मृगाः कालंजरे गिरौ etc., without which no Shraddha is complete is from the Harivamsha. It refers to the repeated births and deaths in different kinds of bodies, and ultimate Moksha of seven Jivas. The Markandeya Purana gives the full story underlying the above verse. One wonders if the Hindus learnt this ritual from the Chinese, dwelling together as they were for centuries across the Himalayan borderland. For ancestor-worship, if one might say so, is *the* religion of China, governed by an imposing and intricate ritual.

A curious incident has remained embedded in Chapter 138 of the Anushasana Parva of the Mahabharata, which seems to throw some light on the genesis of this ritual. It is mentioned therein that one Nimi performed a certain ceremony on the death of a beloved son, but after the performance doubts arose in the Rishi's mind, and he was torn with anguish at having performed a ritual unsanctioned by the Vedas, thus becoming a sinner; but he was eventually consoled by other Rishis, who, farther, laid down that thenceforward such a ceremony would become obligatory; and so the practice gradually gained ground, till it has become what it is these days. It is worthy of note that its beginning is not to be traced in ancestor worship, but in *descendant* "worship," and the first performer after such an act of 'sin,' felt so repentant and miserable that he had to be humoured by his brethren before he could regain his lost peace of mind.

What is needed now is that the ceremonial instead of being allowed to die completely should be shorn of all its mummery and Indrajala, and a new content should be given to it, namely, that of setting apart certain days (like the Christian Lent and the Mohammedan Ramzan) to meditate on the lives of not only our own great men, but also of those of other creeds and other races, and to make vows at the shrine of their glorious memories, that we too would strive with all the power in us to make our lives sublime, and should do nothing that may be ignoble or base and bring shame on our great ancestors. Though it is not given to every one to achieve something grand, yet every one can certainly lay his mite of a brick in the building of civilisation. Our ideal should be not a mere credal calendar of Saints, like the Roman Catholic one, but a really catholic one, like that so well-compiled by Mr. Frederic Harrison, where nearly 600 personages of all nations and of all climes are mentioned. We might add a good many more names to it from the long roll of Indian History.

All unconsciously Manu throws a penetrating ray of light on the actual social condition of the Brahmana, which an unending series of Platonic legislators from Utopia have done their best to hide in impenetrable darkness from the gaze of the matter-of-fact historian. Manu (Chapter III Verses 125-

193) describes those Brahmanas whom he regards as impure and unfit to be fed at a Shraddha. The long list shows what was actually the state of affairs, and I transcribe it below for the edification of my Hindu brethren. Life then, or life now, or in the still earlier Vedic period, has always been and is likely to be much of a muchness and the talk of a Rama-Raja, when every caste fulfilled its own special duties, is nothing but priestly fraud. It must be remembered that Manu was promulgated for the Golden Age, the Satya Yuga—when everything was perfect. But we find that even in that age of perfection the Brahmana-caste comprised within its fold large numbers of persons who did not practise even ordinary morality and the decencies of life, to say nothing of possessing the wisdom and holiness which are the special prerogatives of that caste. We find that very few knew the Vedas and in fact the majority of them were ignorant men, parasites. There were among them "thieves, outcasts, eunuchs, atheists, servants of atheists, gamblers, sufferers from skin diseases (venereal diseases), sellers of flesh, shopkeepers, village-servants, King's servants, usurers, cowherds, members of trade-guilds, caravan-leaders, village headmen, actors, singers, dancers, bards, jugglers, buffoons, those whose only wife is a Shudra woman, those who keep in their own houses paramours of their wives, sons of remarried women, sons of adulteresses, sons of widows, those who teach for payment and their pupils thus taught, teachers of

Shudras, pupils of Shudras, forsakers of mother, of father, of teacher, contractors of alliances with outcastes either through the Veda or through a marriage, incendiaries, poisoners, oilmen, burners of corpses for money, perjurers, forgers, falsifiers of weights and measurers, sacrificers for Shudras, sea-voyagers, those who quarrel with their father, gambling-den-keepers, drunkards, those accused of mortal sins, hypocrites, sellers of sugar-cane-juice and its products, of milk and its products and salt, makers of bows and arrows, those who marry the widows of their elder brothers, epileptics, sufferers from goitre, spies, informers, abusers of the Vedas, physicians, astrologers, teachers of the use of arms, trainers of elephants, oxen, horses, camels, singing birds, hunting-birds, obstructors and divertors of water-courses, architects, masons, peons, gardeners, exorcizers, those who live by the game caught by dogs and hawks, killers in general, defilers of maidens, servants of Shudras, tillers of soil, keepers of buffaloes, sheep and goats, those who have married widows, and carriers of corpses for money." It will be seen from the above list, that there is no sin, crime or trade that was left unpractised by the holy Brahmana-caste in the heydey of their wisdom, glory and greatness, before the world had degenerated into the foul modern age of iron. One trembles to contemplate the depth of degradation in this Kali age! And what about the remaining three castes? At this rate, the most merciful thing that could happen to all would be one big wave of the

Sea engulfing the whole of India in one fell swoop!

SAPINDA

The word "Sapinda" which is one of the most important for a thorough understanding of our social, legal, and theological life, has, so far as I am aware, never been adequately dealt with. There are endless treatises in Sanskrit on the subject, but they confine themselves to an unprofitable and arid discussion as to who come within the category. This way of dealing with the subject had of course the practical end in view, of fixing the persons, (1) who were eligible for marriage and did not come under the prohibited degrees of kinship for the purpose; (2) who had to discharge the duty of performing the Shraddha of a deceased person; and (3) who had the rights of Inheritance. Nowhere I have met with a plain common-sense discussion of the subject going to the root of the idea. I propose to show here, how the Hindu legists in their attempts to be logical and produce a neat clear cut symmetrical list, have woefully muddled the whole business, producing only confusion instead of clarification.

The word Sapinda is made up of *Sa* (same) and *pinda* (body). Later, with the coming into vogue of the ceremonial of the offering of funeral oblations, the word *pinda* came to be employed also for the bolus of food offered to the dead. In the earliest stages naturally the nearest of kin would perform the ritual; but with its ever increasing complexity, and probably also because of some change in the ideas of degrees of inheritability, it became necessary to draw up a list of persons whose duty it would be to perform the Shraddhas. Now it should be clearly borne in mind that the two lists, namely of those who come within the category of Sapindas for purposes of Inheritance and those who come under the category for purposes of marriageability, *differ* and differ fairly widely; and from these, again, differs the third list, namely, of those whose successive duty, in the absence of the preceding person, it becomes, to offer the funeral oblation.

We may begin to perceive now how the present day mischief arose. It arose through the confusing of the two distinct meanings of the term,—namely, (1) physical consanguinity, and (2) the funeral oblation bolus,—by the latter day jurists; their taking one or the other meaning as adequate for *all* the *three* separate purposes; and their insensate love of logical symmetry which made them ride rough-shod over the actualities of life.

The law school which interprets *pinda* as the bolus of food offered to the Pitri at a Shraddha is represented by Devanna Bhatta author of the Smritichandrika, Apararka, commentator of Yajnavalkya, Medhatithi, author of the earliest available commentary on Manu, Madhava, commentator of Parashara Smriti, Jimutavahana, author of the Dharma-ratna of which only two portions, the Kalanirnaya, and the famous Dayabaga are available, Nagesha Bhatta, the great Benares Shastri, author of widely recognised works on grammar, rhetoric, philosophies and Dharma Shastra etc., etc.

The other law school which interprets *pinda* as body is represented by the author of the Mitakshara, by Shulpani Mishra, a Maithila commentator on Yajnavalkya and also author of a Digest, by Vachaspati Misra, and by the authors of the Madanaratna, Madanparijata, Nirnayasindhu, Dharmasindhu, Sanskarakaustubha etc.

Both schools saw that if they rigidly stuck to the single base interpretation the result would be a tremendous divergence in the lists of persons concerned, and so each school circumscribed the definition of Sapinda and did not work out that definition to its full logical sequence. It is probably owing to this fact that the list of who are and who are not Sapindas is so confused. One consequence of a logical working out of the list of inheritors on the basis of interpreting *pinda* as the Shraddha bolus, would have been that every woman would have been disinherited, for no woman can offer *pinda*, and this would have put the Bengal school in a quandery, as Jimutavahan, while restricting the meaning of *pinda* to the Shraddha bolus, is far more generous to woman as Inheritors than the other school.

Nowhere are the book-rules on the subject of marriageability observed in their entirety. The non-observance of them goes to the extent of indulging as a *rule* in the marriage of such near relations,—not only by the lower castes, but even by the Brahmanas, and the Kshatriyas in the Madras and Bombay Presidencies,—as are regarded with abhorrence as incestuous in the other Provinces. There is a further difficulty, which no amount of sheer *panditry* will make a modern man accept as good sense. He cannot help regarding it as absurd casuistry. An example from the Mitakshara will make this clear. Sapindatva (same-bodiness), one can see without any express authoritative text or logical ingenuity, exists in the case of parents and children; in short in all those cases where consanguinity is indisputable. But as this fact of having the blood, in however minute a dose, of one's predecessors would make the line of five ascendants unmanageably huge, it has been artificially limited to five ascendants on the mother's side and to seven on the father's. So far so good. But when the author goes on to assert that the wives of brothers, nephews and maternal and paternal aunts and so on and on are also Sapinda relations, the student begins to rub his eyes and ask whether he is really awake! He cannot for the life of him discover any *uterine* relationship so solemnly asserted in the books. If these writers of Sanskrit Law-Books had not so lamentably wasted their energies in their futile attempts to build up half a dozen separate houses meant for as many distinct purposes and so divergently planned, on one single foundation, there would have been no confusion and no searchings of heart. Marriage, Shraddha, Adoption, Inheritence, Impurity, etc., would all have had their own separate bases to build upon; and all the resultant trouble of Hindus due to this forcible ramming of a square plug into a round hole would have been saved. A little English illogicality and robust commonsense is sometimes very helpful.

The Bengal authorities use the word Sapinda in three different senses: (1) For purposes of counting for impurity, the term denotes agnates within seven degrees. (2) For purposes of Inheritance, the term denotes three generations of agnates together with a few cognates related, as daughter's son, to those agnates. (3) For purposes of marriage, the term denotes all agnates up to the seventh degree on the father's side and all cognates up to the fifth degree on the mother's side. We have seen above in the chapter on marriage, how, for want of a unanimous and commonsense view of what is Sapindaship, not only cousin-marriages continue to be the rule, but practice has gone still further and we see numberless cases of men belonging to all castes and classes, not excepting that of ruling chiefs and learned Brahmanas, marrying their own uterine sister's daughters in Southern India;—not merely मातुलकन्यापरिणय, but far worse मातुलपरिणय in the tracts which constitute the present Bombay and Madras Presidencies. (Mandlik's "Hindu Law." pps. 415-426).

To bring the point home to my non-legal and non-sanskrit knowing readers, I give here the actual figures of barred marriageable relationships. 2016 girls on the father's side and 105 girls on the mother's side come within the prohibited degree; further, for each step-mother another 105, and if the boy is an adopted one these huge figures get automatically *doubled.* Is it any wonder then that these blessed rules exist only in books and are cooly ignored in actual every-day life by every body? If they had been literally obeyed, Hinduism as the religion of a living people would have been dead by now, for the believers would have brought about race-suicide on a truly grand scale, and in the name of orthodoxy too, by making marriage and progenition impossible. If, even with such examples of gross divergence between the actual daily life and the law of the sacred books, people fail to realise the true nature of the Smritis, their commentaries and the Digests, as very largely doctrinaire speculation and not a record of realities, one can only marvel at the power of *avidya*, ignorance, which makes people *seeing, see not.*

We should brush aside all mere dialectical casuistry which has warped so woefully our lists of Inheritors and of persons who can marry each other; we should adjust these lists in the light of the most approved Eugenic teachings on the subject tempered by the Science of Sociology, and go our onward way rejoicing at having knocked off the fetters of Medieævalism. The purely theological questions of Shraddha too will not bother us at all; whoever inherits is the best person to perform the Shraddha of the deceased person from whom he inherits—if he have any faith in the Shraddha rites at all.

PRAVARA AND GOTRA

It is not necessary for us to go into the minutiœ of Bandhu, Sakulya and Samanodaka, three more terms which define the further grades of Sapindaship, for they are not germane to our purpose. We shall deal here only with Pravara and Gotra, the latter somewhat in detail, as it is of the very first importance in the understanding of Hindu life. The idea underlying these terms is the dominating factor when marriages are being arranged, from the highest to all but the very lowest classes or castes. We shall explain first what constitutes Gotra and also Pravara, which is an integral part of the system and then go on to deal with the subject in a historical and critical spirit.

The word *Gotra* means a clan. It is etymologically derived from *gavah* (herd of cattle)—*atra* (here,) a cowpen, a cattle ranch, the primitive nucleus of an Indian household. If the term Gotraja, one belonging to one's own cowpen, had been coined in Arabia or Baluchistan it would probably have been *Ushtraja* —a member of the same camelpen. The head of the clan gave his name to the clan. But, be it remembered, not every head of a clan was given this honour. Only that head of a clan who was a seer of the Vedic Mantras, had this honour. Of such Vedic authors only eight are recognised as founders of clans, namely Jamadagni, Bharadvaja, Gotama, Kashyapa, Vasishtha, Agastya, Atri and Vishvamitra. Then each of these has 1, 2, 3, 5 or 7 *important ancestors.* These are known as Pravara Rishis. The etymological meaning of Pravara is call, or summons, probably from the fact that these names have to be repeated daily. The books state that there are as a matter of fact endless Gotra Rishis, whose names it is impossible to tabulate.

We see everywhere in the world that primitive man invariably gathers in groups under the leadership of some one member of the group. Africa, Arabia, America all show us these tribal organisations. We see to-day in Arabia tribes going under the name of some very early leader and known as the "Children of so and so," *e.g.* Bani (plural of Ibn) Abbas, that is children of Abbas. A further development of this practice occurs in individual names, for instance, Mohammad Ibn Abdullah, Mohammad son of Abdullah. This practice of associating one's father's name with one's own proper name exists to-day among certain Hindu communities also, in the Bombay and Madras Presidencies. Similar was the case in ancient India, and the *Shikha, chundi*, was the 'flag' that proclaimed the fact to the world. This is the real genesis of the tonsorial arrangement of the head of the Hindu male, which the Hindu woman luckily was not forced to accept. Shabara Swami in his Mimansa Bhashya, than which there is no work of greater authority, difinitely says—गोत्रचिह्नं शिखाकर्म – 'the production of special arrangements of the hair of the head through shaving which is known as Shikha-Karma, is for the purposes of pointing out the Gotra, the clan of the person concerned." This will become clear when it is remembered that, unlike present day India when, with the very limited exception of the Malayalis, all Hindus keep the Shikha in only one way, the ancient Hindus carried seven different kinds of arrangements of hair on their heads according to the custom of their Gotras. Instead of carrying a piece of cloth with special devices on a pole as the regiments in an army do, or as the monks of the orders of Sankaracharya and Ramanuja do, the ancient householder Brahmana carried the 'flag' on his head. There are neither occult reasons nor religious or theological implications in this purely secular affair.

To go back to the question of tribal organisation,—we see that like all nomads in the pastoral stage, they had their warrior poet-priest-chief who led them to battles and sung of their exploits and played the 'medicine man' of Africa, coercing or mollifying the supernatural powers. Later when the wandering pastoral life came to be given up for that of a settled agricultural one, ritual had grown so complex that it began to require a whole-timer to perform it efficiently. Thus arose the need of a bifurcation of the duties of the head of the early days, more so as the art of war had also evolved further and demanded specialisation. So the tribes came to have two chiefs or leaders, and, as was to be expected, there was much jealousy between the two and quarrels and intrigues, till finally the inevitable came about and brains got the better of brawn. The struggle of the priestly and warrior classes continued however till about 2,000 years ago, by which time the pretensions of the priests had been almost universally recognised and the classes had petrified into castes with their rigid interdicts on intermarriage and interdining. Those who specialised in ritual, came to be known as Brahmanas, while those who devoted themselves to the arts of war and administration came to be known as Rajanyas.

Anybody who has devoted some attention to the subject with an open mind cannot fail to realise that the foundation of facts is wholly absent from the ideas conveyed by the words Pravara and Gotra. Whatever they may have been 6000 years ago among a small and homogenous community, for at least 2000 years amongst a huge scattered people, who are a most heterogenous conglomeration of the most diverse ethnic groups, numbering thousands, they hav been mere fiction. The late Hon. Mr. Vishvanath Narayan Mandlik, the well-known and highly respected scholar and lawyer of Bombay and a man of unquestioned orthodoxy and himself a Brahman, was the first to point out in his *Hindu Law* their wholly artificial character. He says (pp. 412-413—)" It is no secret that they (Kshatriyas and Vaishyas) have neither Gotra nor Pravara. This is on the authority both of old texts, as well as of current history.

Indeed thousands of Brahmanas themselves in different parts of the country can be said to be hardly any better." In support of his contention he goes on to quote the Nirnaya-sindhu of Kamalakara one of the most authoritative Digests, written in Benares towards the beginning of the 17th century, (the author being the cousin of the equally famous and authoritative Nilakantha author of the Mayukhas, the recognised law-book for Maharashtras). He says—"This shows to what lengths Hindu Society had gone in Kamalakara's times. Since then the confusion and ignorance have become greater still. What is the criterion for settling the validity of these marriages too? The *Purohit* is the officiating priest, and the *Acharya* is one who teaches one Veda. Both these are necessarily changing elements; and even if they were constant it would be ridiculous to determine the marriage-relationship of the parties, from the Gotras and Pravaras of entirely distinct persons." To make the above extract intelligible it may be pointed out that ancient writers, like Ashvalayana in his Shrauta Sutra (Asiatic Society's ed. p. 885), say that Kshatriyas should take the Gotra of their *Purohits*. These ancient writers also advise persons with no Gotra of their own to call themselves of the Gotra of Kashyapa or Jamadagni! In short they suggest a line of action exactly on a par with that which is followed to-day in Arabia for instance, where a person is in constant risk of life or limb, if he is an *unattached*, independent individual, and has perforce to seek the *manus*, the protection, of some tribe, of which he becomes a member, by undergoing certain rites, and thenceforward a blood-brotherhood is established and he calls himself one of the sons of that original tribe-leader by whose name the tribe is known. If such uncertainty and confusion was the case certainly more than 2000 years ago,—for these Sutras composed by Rishis are fairly ancient,—can any reasonable person doubt that in this long interval of time, when Hinduism has been undergoing shock after shock of foreign invasions since B. C. 500, and has been absorbing all this time not only millions of invaders but also endless aboriginal tribes, the slight trace of foundation for the custom that was left in the time of the Sutras has disappeared totally? Unfortunately it has left behind an evil legacy of the most injurious restrictions which are being constantly propped up by blind orthodoxy with assumptions which will not bear the light of day. Mr. Mandlik rightly asks—"Have all the twice-born classes Gotras and Pravaras; or are we trying to square Aryan Society in India into the circle of certain texts, and fit it to them according to certain preconceived notions?" The great jurist and Sanskrit scholar is driven to the only answer possible to this his honest straight-forward question, and he gives it unhesitatingly. He unequivocally asserts that it is all a sham with no reality whatsoever behind it.

There are many works dealing with the subject of Pravara and Gotra from fairly ancient days to quite modern times, and a critical investigation of the subject may throw some light on the vexed question of the hard and fast caste-barriers of the later days. The late P. Chentsal Row C.I.E. of Mysore published for the first time a collection of some of the more important works in one volume in the Mysore Sanskrit series under the title of गोत्रप्रवर निबन्धकदम्बम्—the Principles of Pravara and Gotra,—in 1900, making a tentative beginning for such a critical investigation. Unfortunately the whole matter is so very ancient and so terribly blurred that little solid good is likely to be yielded even by the greatest industry.

[*Rites, Customs, Conventions, Principles,*
which really have nothing to do
with true religion, are disease-excrescences upon it.]

It will not be possible here to comment on all or even the major portion of the degenerate practices, because of their large numbers spread over a vast extent of territory among twenty crores of human beings, split up into over three thousand sub-castes. We shall select a few as samples of what the ancient purer form of the faith has picked up during the course of ages of contact with the surrounding sea of non-Aryan faiths, or as examples of survivals from the ancient days. Such survivals may be merely vanity-soothing, and comparatively innocuous, like the almost dead Agnihotra; or they may be positively harmful now, however necessary they may have been when first started; for instance, the socalled fourfold though in truth literally four-thousand-fold caste system, dividing Hindu society into water-tight compartments, with its accompanying wholly mischeivous fraud of the socalled four-fold stages of life, to which we owe the existence of our fifty lakhs of immoral "ascetics" who roam over the land devouring the substance of honest hard-working but foolish house-holders. This cardinal principle of Hinduism is like the iron band round the heads of the children dedicated to Madar Shah, a Mussalman 'Saint' whose shrine is near Multan. These poor children grow up imbeciles and are known as the "mice of Madar Shah" dragging on a sort of petrified physical existence; as we have been doing for the past many centuries. I shall deal with this subject at length later on.

We extensively worship or regard as sacred, trees and shrubs and grass, like Vata, Ashvattha, Bilva, Rudraksha, Shami, Amalaka, Tulasi, Kusha, Durva. We either worship, or regard as sacred, snakes, monkeys, cows, crocodiles, parrots, crows, swans, peacocks, horses, donkeys, dogs, cats. To save confusion of thought it may be pointed out that it does not necessarily follow that whatever is worshiped is also 'sacred.' Even to the average Hindu it would cause surprise to see included in the list some of the birds and animals, but a little explanation may make matters clear. Parrots are regarded as Brahmanas among birds and so must not be killed, though it is a wholly mischievous bird. Crows are useful helps in sanitation, but they are not to be killed, not because of this, but because the *Pitris* take on that shape when coming to take the Pinda offering ! It is not at all realised that the new untouchable dogs and donkeys were not so in ancient Hinduism. The ass is worshipped to-day as the Vahan of Shitala the small-pox goddess and the dog that of Bhairava. In the Rig Veda we have mantras, depicting the *dana* (religious offering) of camels, dogs, asses, to holy Rishis :—

उष्ट्राणां विंशतिं शता (Mandala 8, Sukta 46)
शुनः शतं (Mandala 8, Sukta 55)
शतं मे गर्दभानां (Mandala 8, Sukta 56)

In view of this is it not absurd to continue to regard such useful animals as unclean ? To the Parsi the dog is an indispensable part of the after-death ceremonies even more so than to us. Monkeys are an unmitigated nuisance ; but because they have come to be regarded as fellow-caste creatures of Hanuman's therefore instead of being completely cleared out, they are fed and worshipped and are spreading all over India.

Similarly there is the squeamishness against the destruction of rats, who only serve to destroy food-grains, dwelling houses, clothing and books, disseminate plague, in short are a purely destructive agency causing endless waste and suffering. For are they not the Vahana of Ganesha and therefore sacred ? When a Pipal tree grows on a house, it is difficult to prevent the house becoming a ruin, for only one of the very lowest caste, could be had who would undertake such a sacrilegious act as the cutting down of the "sacred" tree of Mahadeva. It may be quite right that an agricultural country should worship cattle; but unfortunately the poor beings do not escape exceedingly bad treatment habitually dealt out to them by their worshippers notwithstanding their 'sacredness.' Decency and commonsense, even self-interest, do not always form part of the average Hindu, much to his harm.

During the long ages through which our religion has existed, ancient rites and customs have changed to a large extent; and many not contemplated by the ancient Rishis have crept in and acquired a pseudo-religious sanction. The general causes of the changes have been—intermixture and contact with other races, variations of the climatic conditions and the physical features of the different parts of the country, local civilisation and degeneration on different lines, as Empires rose and fell in the different parts of India, and so on. As a general rule, any rite or custom which is not found everywhere in our land cannot be an integral part of Hinduism. Out of hundreds the following pseudo-religious institutions may be mentioned here as instances of the non-essential, however strongly local prejudice may support them,—different styles of hair-dressing, from no cropping down to clean-shaving of the whole or parts only, of the body; smoking and meat-eating by Brahmanas; non-smoking, as among Sikhs and Maithilas; different styles of male dress and female dress; the purdha system, or shutting up of women; the wearing of a silk cloth during meals; Mangala-sutra, or Tali, round the neck, a red *sindura* mark on the forehead, a silver ornament on the ankle or toe, an iron or glass ring round the wrist as necessary marks of Suvasini; the obligation on men and women to wear, or not to wear, kachha; to cover the head or otherwise among women; going on sea voyages, long or short; questions of interdining or otherwise; festivals not universally observed. These cannot be essentials of Hinduism, or Sanatana Dharma, in any sense of the word.

Other relics of pseudo-religion are such practices as those of boring holes in the nose and ears, and inserting enormous and numberless rings in them; of wearing silk garments when worshipping as a sign of holiness, while among the Shri Vaishnavas it is regarded as unholy to use it for such purposes; and of tattooing the face and the different parts of the body. The belief about these tattoo-marks is that without them no woman would be able to go to heaven, for it is only by these that a husband will be able to recognise his wife and take her along with him to heaven! Probably the humorous original inventor, in order to push his trade, invented also this 'beautiful story as an advertising dodge for securing the custom and the pennies of the simple village-ladies, and the thing was duly embodied in the next edition of the favorite Puranas as an essential article of faith, and the jest became earnest.

The dread of such natural events as the eclipse, or of pathological conditions as small-pox, leading to wasteful, ridiculous and brutal, sometimes even criminal, practices, such as those of feeding overfed Brahmanas, of swallowing filthy decoctions of cow-dung and urine, worshipping donkeys, sacrificing goats and buffaloes, and even offering up human victims before the various forms of Kali;—all of these and many more such degrading and ridiculous practices only a rational education can wipe out.

It is not generally realised that a good many of these different and differing practices are also due to the successive layers of Aryan immigration into the different parts of India, and have their root in the very earliest days. To take one instance, like the Hebrews, we too literally have our Shibboleth. The northern Hindus, the Pancha-gaudas, pronounce य and ष as Ja and Kha, while the Southern Hindus, the Pancha-dravidas pronounce them as Ya and Sha. This persistent difference in pronunciation is not a recent one but comes down from the very earliest days, when the progenitors of these two sections were evidently distinct tribes, and to this fact must be traced many a practice which, though they both believe in the same books, is abhorred by the one while followed by the other. The two streams of migration met each other possibly so late that attrition had not time to reduce the differences and angles. This distinction still lingers on in Afghanistan, where one tribe pronounces the same word as Pakhto and another as Pashto; their conversion to Islam apparently has had no influence over the old traditions. The fact that in the ancient days, all those countries—Afghanistan, Turkistan, Baluchistan, Khiva, Bokhara etc., as also Java, Sumatra, Siam, Cambodia,—were Hindu and ruled by Hindu Chiefs, is lost sight of by the modern Hindu ; yet this fact was a potent factor in the marvellous spread of Buddhism into all those countries and into China and Japan in the East, Mongolia, and adjoining countries in the North, and the borders of Persia in the West. The religion had not to step very far across the political boundaries of Hindu dominion. Should not this glorious past spur us to throw off our sloth and our evil habits and practices, and thrust back the decay that inexorable Nature has in store for all laggards, and regain our ancient greatness and self-respect, and rise once more in the scale of Nations?

Caste.

IN this last chapter I propose to very briefly touch on the European theories and give a summary of the various and conflicting Hindu statements on the subject of the caste-system as embodied in our sacred books,* deal with the present chaotic state of affairs, and finally discuss its harmful effects in every sphere of our life—social, economical, political, intellectual, industrial, artistic etc. I am no believer in either the possibility or the utility of attempting to merely break down its rigidity and put it on a *selective* basis, in the hope that where the impersonal, extraneous law of Karma had failed so conspicuously, there would be found men sufficiently wise and disinterested to select only the fit for each of the four castes. This dreamer's fancy is workable only in cloudland. Despite Plato and other Utopians, there is no *via media*; either the caste system must continue to be hereditary or it must go. Otherwise, even under conditions of peace imposed by a foreign power, there will be daily bloodshed, as in the days of Vasishtha and Vishvamitra, when the former resisted with all his might the entrance into his caste of the latter,

---

*For the best available collection of these statements, see J. Muir's *Original Sanskrit Texts*, Vol. I. (Second edition). For much interesting information regarding divisions and subdivisions of caste in present-day India, see The Census Report of India, 1911, Vol. I, by E. A. Gait.

who was no less determined to gain admittance. In modern India, it will supply endless grist to the mill of the vakil and overwhelm both the civil and criminal Courts with work.

CASTE—THE HEART OF PRESENT DAY HINDUISM.

In the matter of Caste we touch the very heart of Hinduism as it is to-day and as it has been for very many centuries past. No Hindu can deal with this to him supreme question in the pure, critical, dispassionate aloof spirit, whether of the judge or the historian. It is much too intimately blended with every fibre of his existence to allow of being handled as something outside himself. He is born in its lap. Its all-pervasive pressure is everywhere present with him from birth to death. Mostly he is a defender of the system—or rather the chaos that masquerades as a cosmos—owing to his phenomenal ignorance of it as a whole, as it exists and operates throughout this huge country. The defence ranges from the old-world orthodox assertions that it is a Divine institution and that God created the Brahman from his mouth, the Kshattriya from his arms, the Vaishya from his thighs and the Shudra from his feet, and that they are as distinct species of animals as, for instance, the monkey, the wolf, the jackal, and the pig, down to the arguments set up by the English-educated folk of this day, who try to gild over the monstrosity and make it presentable in an era of *humanism* and of democracy by quietly withdrawing all emphasis from its hereditary physical basis, and growing eloquent over its spiritual aspect, pressing the philosophical theory of *karma* into their service.

What stands in the way of taking a dispassionate view of the question has been expressed forcibly in an article printed in the *Indian Antiquary* (January 1911) where we read as follows:—

"It remains to refer to certain kinds of mental bias that are apt to affect the judgment in questions of Indian history. There is, in the first place, what may be called the 'patriotic bias,' which is shared by the Indian and European alike; it shows itself in a tendency to exaggerate the freedom of India from foreign influences and to claim entire originality for such inventions as the Indian alphabet, which bear their foreign origin on their face. This school loves to trace the leading castes of the present day to an Aryan origin, and to accentuate the Hindu orthodoxy of the kings and conquerors of old. When these are looked upon as Hindus from the beginning, the most important fact in Hindu history is overlooked. I mean the attractive power of Hindu civilisation which has enabled it to assimilate and absorb into itself every foreign invader, except the Moslem and the European. *Those Indians indeed have a poor opinion of their country's greatness who do not realise how it has tamed and civilised the Nomads of Central Asia so that wild Turcoman tribes have been transformed into some of the most famous of the Rajput royal races.*"—(A. M. Jackson—quoted in the *Indian Antiquary*, January 1911.)

Among those who condemn the system, there are but few out and out abolitionists; mostly they are for making the entrance to a higher or the highest caste, a matter attainable in one life-time, instead of its being spread out over many life-times; for who knows for a certainty what happens when the present life is ended? It is not so much the *gradation* that they condemn as the rigidity which prevents a Shudra, or a Vaishya, from being recognised as a Brahman or a Kshatriya. If all were to be herded together on a footing of equality, where would be the room for that soul-satisfying tickle to vanity which is the terrible spur to so much mischievous human activity? As the Sanskrit cynic has it—

अधोऽधः पश्यतः कस्य महिमा नोपचीयते ।

" Where is the person whose greatness is not heightened by the spectacle of persons lower and lower than himself "?

But the spectacle unfortunately has another aspect also, in the words of the same cynic—

उपर्युपरि पश्यन्तः सर्व एव दरिद्राति ।

'Every person feels his smallness as he looks upwards, higher and higher".

We Hindus, whether English educated or Sanskrit educated, vernacular educated or altogether unlettered, whether orthodox or heterodox, cannot think of an organised, social, political, economic or religious life whether consciously or unconsciously, except in terms of caste-nomenclature and differentiated grading. We insensibly rebel against the magnificent assertion of the dignity of Man as Man, so uncompromisingly put forward by the great peasant poet of Scotland, Robert Burns.

> “ The rank is but the guinea stamp
> The man's the gold for a' that.”

This has been the ideal preached in India also, by many a religious reformer; witness the thrilling hymn, which in words of ringing power declares how the great reviver of Advaita Vedanta, Shankaracharya, was rebuked by a Chandala of Benares, where the young philosopher had come to preach his doctrines and gain the stamp of approval for it from this ancient seat of Hindu learning. As Shankaracharya was about to enter into the town he saw a Chandala on the road before him. The Chandala knew that the teacher of Vedanta was still in the grip of the horrible system of social gradations of Tamil and especially Nair and Nambudri India, where such low castes as his must not come within 64 cubits of the high caste men on pain of being done to death. The Vedanti motioned to the Pariah to get out of the way. Then came unexpected instruction from this lowly person of the despised community, and the eyes of the philosopher of *advaita* were opened to the inward meaning of his own teaching. The Chandala asked him :—

> अन्नमयादन्नमयं अथवा चैतन्यमेव चैतन्यात् ।
> द्विजवर दूरीकर्तुं वाञ्छसि किं ब्रूहि गच्छ गच्छेति ॥

“ O Sannyasin, what dost thou want removed from thy path ?
The physical from the physical or Spirit from Spirit ?”

He then goes on to teach the teacher :—

विप्रोऽयं श्वपचोऽयमित्यपि महानकोऽयंविभेद भ्रमः

"Whence this great illusion of separateness, that this person is a Vipra and that person a dog-eater ?"

Note the delicate irony—the Brahmana is as much of a butcher and eater of animals, not only behind the curtain of vedic sacrifices of cows, horses, goats etc., but even in his daily fare, (see *Manu* for the various kinds of animals, birds, and fishes, which are lawful food for the Brahmana), as the despised and down-trodden untouchable Chandala. In one of his philosophical hymns, the first Shankaracharya runs down the institution of caste and of the stages of life,

नवर्णा न वर्णाश्रमाचारधर्माः

but unfortunately he confines this proper social behaviour of equality to philosophy only, and would not have the whole of Hindu India *act* up to it. Herein he grievously narrowed down the Buddhist reformation, while quietly stealing its philosophy.

Every moment we are reminded in India that the European missionary belongs to the now highest caste in the land—the pure, unadulterated, super-brahmin caste from the West. He is as bent on converting the 'heathen'—Hindu as well as Moslem—as the missionary of Islam, but there is a striking difference between their respective attitude to their converts. Socially the 'native' Christian convert is kept at his proper distance by the European missionary and no mingling of blood is tolerated. Not such is the treatment meted out to the convert to Islam. Every Mohamedan is a *brother* and is treated accordingly. Luckily for Hinduism, Islam by its crudeness and savagery, and Christianity by its social hauteur and aloofness, have antagonised it and roused its self-respect to the point which it has become impossible for the upper class Hindu, at any rate, to cross. (It may be said here, by the way, that the Hindu would do well to take to heart the reasons which have made Christianity such a bad failure in its attempts to convert Moslems.)

A homogeneous, democratic nation recognising at its full value the dignity and worthiness of mere manhood, in which nation none is so set up above the others that he would be polluted not merely by the mere shadow but by the mere sight also of another human being, and none so lowly that his mere sight pollutes, to say nothing of his touch, was not given to Hindu polity to evolve. It was a feat reserved for the prophet of Islam. Even Christ has not been successful.

FAILURE OF EFFORTS TO IMPROVE OR ABOLISH.

In India every revolt against the bitter tyranny of the system, every attempt to save the souls of the people from its corroding activity—overweening arrogance on the one side, and abject lowliness on the other—have all failed so far to drive out the incubus. Indeed each such attempt has only succeeded in creating a new sub-caste. For no sooner did the old organisation sense danger to its life, it at once built up an isolating wall round the threatening solvent, and went its own way rejoicing. One thing however is dead certain now. Things cannot much longer continue to be what they are. The caste system and all that it stands for is doomed. Its death may come in either of two ways. Either (1) the Hindu thought, which keeps it alive, will so change by adapting itself to its present day environment, that it will break down all those social practices which lead to exclusiveness; or (2) its votaries will die out. The census, decade after decade, shows irrefutably that the Hindu birth rate is lower and death rate higher than that of Mussalmans and Christians, and in point of numbers, the proportion is rapidly changing for the worse for the Hindu.

If we Hindus really believe that there is much that is valuable in our ancient culture, and that we would prove false custodians if we did not continue to hand on from father to son its light undimmed, it behoves us to seriously ponder over the two paths. In the one case, that of death for want of followers, the culture also is doomed; the virile Semite, whether Syrian or Arabian, will have none of it. In the other case, the terrible handicap in the struggle for existence will have been removed and our culture too will help to make the world brighter along with that of the Christian and the Mussalman. But then it comes to be a question of speed; we must adapt ourselves to our present environment in time for the change to be of real help. As the great Tulasidas has said:—

का बरषा जब कृषी सुखानी '

What is the good of rain after the crops have withered?"

It will not do to dawdle in this race of life or death. It is we only who can act as a buffer between the crescent and the cross, and we can do that only if we realise that our tri-shula is crescent and cross combined. Once we allow ourselves to go under, these two will be left face to face, and as there is little love lost between them, the India of the future will fight many an internecine war over the question of the supremacy of the one or the other.

The two strong barriers to a speedy and widespread adoption of progressive ideas and specially of practices by us, are, firstly, the narrowness of our womankind, encrusted all over as they are with the prejudices of ages upon ages and, secondly, the economic factor. The former is being slowly all too slowly, dissolved by education; and the latter is changing, perhaps much too fast, under western pressure. Hinduism, as it has been for hundreds of generations, has evolved into an all powerful economic machinery, feeding millions. Hereditary status has come to be its mainspring. Individual initiative and its inevitable corollary, variation, and the consequent increase in the power of adaptability, have always been repressed with a stern hand, with the result that the faculty itself was becoming atrophied. But the hustling West has produced an Industrial Revolution in the country, which has pulverised all old-world ideas of status and of hereditary occupations. Further, western education, with its rights of man, and aggressive individuality, is having a most disruptive influence on the ideas and practices of social precedence derived from a caste basis.

So far, whenever a change was advocated, the question has come up: how are the hungry millions, who have been generation after generation, like the oilpresser's ox, grinding blind-fold at their trade, to feed themselves, if this vast trade-guild, known as the caste-system, was to go. Each one would have had to think and to carve out a career with struggle and with anguish for himself and his family under the newer conditions of existence. To take a concrete instance, that of Benares. Will its citizens be sufferers or gainers by a change in the present day Hinduism? From the days of Buddha down to the latest reformer Dayananda, not one has succeeded, during this enormous period of 2500 years, in persuading its inhabitants to cease from idolatry, to give up the caste system, and to regard the Ganga as only a mighty river. Why? Simply because the *economic* welfare of the city has been all along the result of these ideas and practices, and if these were to be given up, the starvation and decay of much of its population would inevitably follow. We can realise the strength of these ideas still better, if we recall to mind that while many another Indian city, attacked by Moslem hordes, succumbed, not so Benares. Three separate times it was given up to Islamic fanaticism between the 11th and 17th century A. D., but each time it rebuilt its temples and installed new images in them. Buddhist Benares (Sarnath), after it was demolished in the 11th century and its monks killed by the Moslem soldiery, failed to recover, and remains a ruin to-day, because an *economic factor imperatively demanding its resuscitation was absent.* This is why other Buddhist shrines also—which have all been destroyed by Mohamedans,—remain unbuilt, while every Hindu sacred city has built up its forces anew after the passing away of every destructive wave. Even politics at bottom is nothing but economics. The ultimate questions are only two, the problem of food supply and of tribe supply.

Mohammad, far-sighted diplomatist that he was, saw with his clear vision that if Mecca, his birth place, was to become his staunch supporter instead of continuing to remain his bitter enemy, he must provide for its economic well-being. He therefore subordinated his iconoclastic zeal to the realities of the situation, and by sanctioning the idolatry of the Kaaba he won the whole-hearted loyalty and adherence of the Meccans.

WHAT IT MEANS TO-DAY

To come to details—the first question to consider is—What is the condition of affairs denoted by the term caste? It denotes that condition of Hindus in which the spirit of exclusiveness has gone on intensifying to such an extent that the possibility of *connubium* and of *commensality* has been clean lost among members of not only the same caste, but even the same sub-caste. The principle of division has been carried to such fine distinctions that, even where you may *take* the daughters of a sub-sub-caste for wives, you may not *give* your daughters for wives to the male members of the sub-sub-caste of your wives. With such a rigid interdict over intermarriage and interdining the result was foregone. The possibility of all those people professing Hinduism coalescing into a homogeneous Nation has been abolished. There are thousands of clashing units, each encased in its own carapace, each serenely unmindful of the interests of the others and of the whole, each intent on its own narrow life and interests.

THE WORD VARNA (*i.e.,*) CASTE.

The Sanskrit term which is applied to this state of things is *Varna.* This term is used in the Rig Veda to denote classes of men, the 'Dasa' and the Aryan *Varna* being contrasted on account of colour or complexion (Rig Veda 2-12-4 and 3-34-9). Here we have only two colours; but the later Samhitas and Brahmanas speak of four *Varnas* in the sense of caste, and thus was built up the theory of the four castes being originally of four different colours—the Brahmana, white, the Kshatriya red.

the Vaishya yellow, the Shudra black. In the primal days of pure unadulterated goodness—*sattva*—there was only one caste and its colour was golden, that is to say, yellow. It is very significant that this should be the colour assigned by the *Smritis* to the Vaishya. Unfortunately for this beautifully simple colour-bar theory of caste, stubborn facts make mincemeat of it. There are no yellow-skinned people who are even Hindus, to say nothing of Vaishyas, unless suffering from jaundice. Nor are there red-coloured Kshatriyas, unless a long course of tippling has given some a glowing ruddy nose and face. There are millions of Brahmans who are dark or even black, and millions of Shudras who are comparatively fair, white. But all this has brought no disillusionment; the uncomfortable theory is thrust into the background, is coolly ignored, and *Varna* flourishes. But even here there is disagreement among the authorities, thus the Kathaka Samhita (XI. 6) insists that the Vaishya is white and the Kshatriya *dhumra*, dark or smoke coloured.

If this perfectly unmistakable colour-criterion had been rigidly adhered to,—so that no person who was black could be a Brahmana, and none who were not red could be Kshattriyas,—all the evil and heart-burning, civil strife and tyranny, would never have come into existence, and India would not have fallen a victim to such lamentable degeneracy.

A more satisfactory etymology of the word *varna*, which fits in better with the practical operation of the system, has been advocated by some scholars. According to this the term is derived from *vri*—to choose, *vrinoti*—chooses, etc. *Varna* would thus mean *occupation*, *vocation*, *function*. This would show that in its *inception* the caste system had only a *vocational* basis and not a *colour* basis, or a nose-basis as another theory has it.

The Mahabharata (Shanti-parva) speaks of the Vaishya as 'born out of the Rig Veda, the Kshatriya as 'born out of the Yajur Veda,' and the Brahmana having his origin in the Sama Veda.

ऋग्भ्योजातं वैश्यंवर्णमाहुः सामवेदो ब्राह्मणानां प्रसुतिः ।
यंजुर्वेदं चत्रियस्याहुर्योनिम् पूर्वपूर्वेस्य वेरेभ्यस्तदूचुः ॥

THE SYSTEM—ITS ORIGIN.

Passing from the word to the thing, we find that many theories have been evolved by European investigators as to the root cause which has given birth to this phenomenon, unique in the human world, and the various stages by which the seedling has branched out through the course of ages into its present gigantic ramifications. None of these however has succeeded in solving the problem fully. If there had existed true histories, they may have thrown light on the thick darkness. But none such exist. The records we have, are very fragmentary, very contradictory, and coloured through and through with the theological speculations and prejudices of their writers. The wild ethnological theorising set out with ponderous solemnity, for instance in *Manu*, by which the hundreds of separate castes are made to arise from the various permutations and combinations of the four primary castes, would only raise scornful laughter were it not for their blighting effect on the whole community.

The most plausible explanation of the origin of the caste system appears to be the following :—

In ancient times there were certain heads of go-tras (cow-pens), who were *chosen* to this dignity from among the gotrajas and called Rishis; they were akin to the 'medicine men' of the American and African tribes of modern days. There were seven Gotras at first, each with a Rishi as its leader. Later, with multiplying duties, a second head was chosen from among themselves by the gotrajas to assist the chief, his duties being mainly those of protection from outside enemies. This gradually led to a definition of the functions and powers of the two. The first, gradually relinquishing their active functions and confining themselves to the sacrificial and ceremonial portions of their duty, were transformed into Brahmanas, *i.e.*, knowers of the ritual, the Brahmana; it is a later and false etymology which would derive the name from the knowlege of the philosopher's Brahman; while the second, with their following, being freed from ceremonial duties and confined mainly to the defence of these small and scattered colonies, were transformed into Kshatriyas, with great power over the tribe. This in time led to mutual jealousy, as in Sparta between its two jointkings, and finally quarrels, in which, as usual, the brain won against the body, and the Kshattriyas were subdued and put into the second position, and were left to enjoy in peace their wealth and power, on condition of their submission to the Brâhmanas. But before their arrogance was subdued by the Brâhmanas, they had succeeded in reducing the citizens of the free republics, which had chosen them as heads, to a low and dependent position—permanently degrading the people who formed the backbone of these groups, closing to them all prospects of rise into the *classes* of Kshatriyas and Brâhmanas, and degrading them into a third class, that of Vaishyas, thus cutting off the source from which the leaders were drawn, to the steady deterioration of all concerned. This breaking up of the older polity by shortsighted lust of power, and the consequent ever-increasing interdict on intermarriage and interdining, has prevented the people from remaining one Nation and being in the van of civilisation, instead of in the rear, as they are at present. The Rishis, thus freed from work in the world, and receiving the highest honour and unquestioning obeisance, made most stringent rules for their order. These rules were meant to force them to devote their time wholly to the development of their spiritual side and the strengthening of their intellectual powers—till, in modern times, the Brahmana has come to regard himself as greater than the gods—for are not the gods subject to Mantras, of which the Brahmana is the master—and to be so regarded also by the bulk of the population whom he regards as lower than beasts, whose very shadow brings pollution to his sacred person! We need not be surprised at this, for as far as we can discover to-day, they had acquired and exercised enormous privileges and powers fairly early. Some of these powers and privileges, though somewhat in abeyance in the larger part of India, still continue to be wielded in something like their pristine splendour in such remote corners of the country as Cochin, Travancore, Nepal &c.

There is no doubt that caste arose out of function becoming hereditary. It is the resultant of both the forces of fission as well as fusion. The limitation on the individual freedom of choice in the marriage market and in the dinner companion, while making the work of conversion to the Fire-cult easy, prevented the coalescing of the numerous tribes into one nation. The tribal priest came to be called Brahman, but this did not expand his marriage market, nor did it of the ruler, who came to be called Kshatriya. This interdict did not arise, it seems, in the very earliest days, when there was a dearth of people professing the vedic faith. Everyone interested in the question of race and environment should make a careful study of *The Jew* in the *Contemporary Science Series*. It is an eye-opener.

ANOTHER EXPLANATION OF ORIGIN

The real ancient dividing line was one of cult—(1) the followers of the first cult, that is the believers in the Vedas, and (2) their enemies. The former were Aryas, the latter, un-Aryas, Dasyus, Anasas. The former embraced all the upper three castes, and in the latter were indiscriminately jumbled together the many non-believing Indian and non-Indian tribes as Shudras. The unfortunate word *Anasa* has been fearfully mangled by European Sanskritists. It has been split up into *a*, without, and *nasa*, nose; and, on the basis of this ridiculous etymology, much arrant nonsense has been talked about the "noseless" Dravidian aborigine and his conqueror the nosy Aryan. The correct explanation of Sàyana was all along before their noses, but in their perverse blindness they refuse still to see it.

According to this great scholiast, the word should be split up as *an*, without, and *as*, mouth. The peoples of the Fire-cult who made their offerings in fire, and regarded it as the *mouth* of the Gods, held that those who did not so offer sacrifices were *mouthless*. But for some strange inexplicable perversity the wide-awake European, who sees daily in his life that the Dravidian is no more noseless than he himself, still persists in asserting that he is noseless!

It needs no pointing out now-a-days, that it is no proof of sameness or distinctness of two races if they happen to speak the same language, or two distinct languages. Two distinct races may speak one and the same language, or two distinct languages may be spoken by one race. Nor can territorial proximity or distance be a test of similarity or dissimilarity of race.

CASTE-DIVISIONS

The real line of division in these days between one caste and another and between their numberless sub-divisions is the rigid interdict put upon intermarriages. The departure on this point from the old Hindu practice has been most marked; even such late rules as those of Manu allowed a man of the higher castes to take a wife from the lower, the oldest practice of recognised intermarriages *both ways* among the castes being dead long before his days. No account of course is here taken of those numerous unrecognised 'intermarriages', prevalent always in the country, where a higher caste woman is living with a man of a lower caste. Sporadic instances of such recognised intermarriages as those between persons of the same caste but different races, or of different castes but the same race, or of different castes and of different races, and so on, are beginning to occur in British India, showing clearly the trend of the times. The subject of "Connubium" and of "Citizenship" may be further profitably studied by all those interested in these vital questions, as a factor in national decline, in the serious disputes which at one time threatened the sturdy life of early Rome, which, however, unlike us, the Romans succeeded in getting over by getting rid of the causes of dispute.

Since the days when the doctrine of caste began to loom large on the horizon of Hinduism, till the days when it grew so huge and insistent as to enfold and concentrate within its inky shroud the whole of Hinduism itself, it seems to have undergone four fairly well defined transformations. In the earliest days, when the race was compact and homogeneous, and had not scattered and come into contact with other races, there seems to have been no question of caste but only one of profession. No sacrosanct ideas attached to the subject and each one was free to follow the pursuit that best suited his capacity and no questions were asked. Witness the celebrated hymn in the Rig Veda where a Rishi describes his mother as being a corn-grinder, his father as a mender of chariots, and himself as a singer of Vedic hymns, &c. (IX. 112. 3). Similar was the case in old Iran in the time of Zarathushtra. His three sons severally taking up the professions of agriculturist, warrior, and priest. Incidentally, we may indulge in a philological guess as to the significance of the name of the prophet of Persia ; its use seems to be on a par with the Hindu usage of calling any distinguished person a " bull, " a " lion " &c., just like the old English usage of naming persons as Wolf this or Wolf that. If this is so then Jarat (old) and ushtra (camel) would signify an " old camel " and spitam may be sphita, fat or prosperous, or sphuta, clear. So that the name would signify a fat, or a prosperous, or a clear-headed old camel. And as Nara-pungava is no individual's name, so neither is Zaratushtra, but only a generic name which by some chance 'stuck,' like

Brihad-ashva, "large-horse" till the real name itself was forgotten, and for all after ages the prophet remained a Sphitam or Sphutam Jarat-ushtra.

SUCCESSIVE STAGES

In the changes which the idea and practice of caste has undergone, we see that the second stage is reached when the self-contained race has grown in numbers and finding the original home too cramped for its activity begins to scatter. As usual under such circumstances, only the young and the vigorous would start from the old home unhampered with families. In the new places they reach they would take the women of the place to wives, and, being only a small community and wishing to enlarge their numbers, they would incorporate the progeny of such unions amongst themselves. Such an action, one can see, would be forced practically on the small community of colonists and adventurers as a measure of safety living as they did amidst hostile surroundings. This would be the second stage of the development of the caste idea, when emphasis would be placed on the Seed (the man) and not on the Field, (the woman) as Hindu books express it. The third stage was reached when they came into still closer and more friendly contact with larger masses of men in settled and organised communities, and to prevent themselves being swamped, the emphasis was transferred from the Seed to the Field. Henceforth the progeny of the union of the conquering race of males with the women of the conquered belonged to the 'caste' of his or her mother, *i. e.*, her race or tribe. We see the process in full swing to-day in Malabar where the child of the Brâhmana by a Nair woman becomes a Nair. As a matter of fact there is so much of Brâhmana blood in the veins of the Nair-shûdra, that he might justifiably claim to be a Brâhmana! At present he wants only to be recognised as a Kshattriya. Finally we come to the fourth, the present stage, when each caste and subcaste marries only within itself, and no union of sexes other than this is recognised as legal.

THE MALABAR SYSTEM

It might not be amiss to give here a brief description of the Malabar system of "marriage." Very little is known about it to the outside world, though it has so profoundly affected the condition of the women of that country, that to-day they *never* become widows, and have full economic independence, and are perfectly at liberty to "marry" or not. In fact they have got all the rights and privileges for which the Western woman is hankering and struggling—and even more.

The highest caste in Malabar, or Kerala as the inhabitants love to call their country, is the Nâmbudri Brâhmana; all the other Brâhmanas throughout India rank a good deal lower in his estimation. After this comes the caste to which the Râjas belong and is known as the Thiruvapâd. Much lower down come the bright, intelligent, energetic Nairs. There are still deeper depths of degradation in the caste scale. Outside of the Nâmbudri and the ordinary members of the Thiruvapâd caste there is no marriage as we understand the word. Amongst the Nâmbudris however only the eldest son marries and he is polygamous. This makes it possible for all the girls of the caste to be provided with a husband. He inherits the family property to the exclusion of his other brothers and sisters. For they are governed by the law of primogeniture, which has helped to perpetuate the family wealth, power and prestige. Among the Nairs the woman "marries" and "owns" the husband and not the other way as in the rest of the world. She generally prefers to have a "sacred" Nâmbudri as a "husband" rather than a man of her own low caste. She regards it as a great honour. She provides for the children and they belong to her own caste. This is the way in which all the unmarried Nâmbudris are provided with women. They are at perfect liberty to give up one woman and take to another or even to have two or three at a time. Similarly the woman can change her man. All this is easy and possible because of her economic independence due to the peculiar law of inheritance prevalent amongst them.

The power of these Nâmbudris is only fully realised when one studies their relation to the Râjas and their families. How they have worked on the ignorance and inherited prejudices of ages to consolidate and keep supreme this power and position in the country is revealed only then. The present day

Nâmbudrī is usually an ignorant creature, not even knowing Samskrit, much less English; and, as for travel, none have gone beyond the limits of Malabar. Like the Sultans of Turkey, the Râjas of Cochin and Travancore do not marry—nor do the other members of their family—like the average castefolk of these chiefs who do marry in proper style. The Travancore Maharaja takes a Nair woman to be his "wife" —who is kept in seclusion; similarly the Cochin Raja takes a "wife" from among the Nairs, but she is not secluded. These ladies are not to be confounded with the Rânis or Mahâ-rânis, who are the sisters of these Chiefs and not their 'wives.' About this question of seclusion of women—the Nair women are of course not goshâ. The only goshâ women are the Nâmbudris; but it is a curious kind of purdâ—not unlike that practised among the Kashmiri Pandits, whose women observe no purda among their own caste; the women appear freely before all the men of their own caste, but hide behind huge umbrellas before others, or when they have occasion to go out. This peculiar zenana-system seems to be almost tribal in its origin, where the women have to be preserved from the inroads of men of other and possibly hostile tribes. The children born to these chiefs merge in the Nair caste, the sons having Nair "wives" and the daughters Nâmbudri "husbands." But though both the Rajas belong to the same caste they will not interdine, because the Cochin Raja prides himself on being higher in the scale than his brother of Travancore.

Here is the reason for it, which must sound more than strange to uninitiated ears. While the niece of the Travancore Maharaja is married properly to one of her own caste and it is the son by this marriage that succeeds, the practice in Cochin is that the niece is "married" to a Nâmbudri and not married to one of her own caste, hence the children are regarded as higher in the caste scale. The law of Nepotism literally rules the country. Fuller details of all these customs are to be found in a small book by Gopal Paniker, "The Malabar and its Folk," and in the Malabar Marriage Commission Report, as also the various Census Reports of the two Native States.

A NEPAL ANALOGY

Similarly in Nepal the Newari women never become widows. As babies, they are 'married' to a Bael fruit, which is thrown into some sacred stream; arriving at puberty, they take up a 'husband', who may be easily divorced by the woman putting a betel-leaf under his pillow and walking off. (Wright, *History of Nepal*).

THE SHUDRA

Historically speaking, the present-day Shudra is the descendant of the early indigenous priests, rulers, and tillers of the land, as the Pariah is the representative of a still earlier layer of conquest. As the land and its peoples came more and more under the control of the Aryan immigrants, they lost not only all their independence, but also their high status, by the imposition of the caste-system and the loss of their lands and cattle, and were finally reduced to serfdom by their pitiless invaders. The political conquest was ruthlessly followed by the more drastic social conquest, which utterly destroyed this self-respect and they came to regard themselves as unclean and low creatures.

It will be useful for us to remember that while we rightly object to the word ‘ Native ’ in the way it is applied to us by the Englishman of ‘ tiger qualities ’ (as the *Pioneer* once lovingly delineated him, and called upon Indians to worship him and fear him), we too of the ‘ higher ’ castes must forbear from the use of the words ‘ Shûdra ’ and ‘ Chândâla,’ which convey a deeper contempt and greater hatred than ‘ Native. After a wellnigh thousand years of foreign domination, our egotism has not become mellowed ; small blame then to the unphilosophic rulers of to-day, if they have failed to subdue the expression of their pride.

As a fact, at the present day, the sober truth is that all caste-distinctions have disappeared to give place to one universal caste, that of the pedlar and the huckster. We may, in our idiocy, continue to take pride in our splendid ancestry and lovingly trace our descent from the Great Prajâpati, through Vasishtha and Angiras, or from the Sun and the Moon, through Manu and Pururavas ; but in point of fact, we are all to-day but the non-productive ‘ Bania,’ the wretched middleman,—(as the Samskrit shloka rightly but bitterly depicts—सर्वे वाणिग्वृत्तयः)—who barters away his birth-right for the flesh-pots of Egypt, which too, alas! he but seldom gets.

OTHER THEORIES OF CASTE.

Details of modern research into this thorny subject of caste are given in the Census Report of 1901. Some of these may be examined.

Sir H. H. Risley's theory, even though he bases it on anthropometric measurements, is sheer nonsense. The statistics and the measurements on which they are based are altogether unreliable; and there is any amount of objective proof available to upset the fine-spun theories. Building on the illusory theory of the *anasa* (noseless) Dravidian population of the country and their fair and nosy Aryan conquerors, he has by means of a *very few* measurements concocted a table of gradations according to which a person's caste position is governed by the size and shape of his nose! One wonders at the strange blindness which has prevented him from seeing that, on the whole, even the untouchable castes of the Punjab, for instance, have better noses than, say, the Bengali and Tamil Brahmanas, or that there is nothing to choose between the noses of Tamil Brahmanas and Tamil Shudras. Similarly Nesfield's theory that the peoples of India are homogeneous, that caste is a purely functional affair, and that there is no ethnic difference between the Brahman and the Scavenger is almost equally far from the truth.

Geographical barriers, and the caste system with s interdicts on free intermarriages, have largely pre vented the Indian peoples from becoming a physically homogeneous nation. Nesfield is right only so far that within a limited territorial boundary, that is to say if we take as groups only a few districts within this limit, the old settled population is physically largely homogeneous and that it is impossible to tell the caste of any person simply from his look, provided the subtle indications of theological stamps, caste marks, tonsorial and sartorial rig up, can all be eliminated.

Sir H. H. Risley who was no expert ethnologist, nor was helped by such experts has evolved theories which will not bear a close examination. He is convicted of error out of his own mouth. He says that the whole of Madras, Hyderabad, the Central Provinces, most of Central India and Chota Nagpur is pure Dravidian. If so, whence the tremendous caste strictness of Southern India, even if we take into account only the non-Brahmanas? Then again if, as he says, Punjab has only the Aryan race and the nasal indices of the lowest and highest castes are not differentiated, then whence the great caste gulf between them? It would require a much longer treatment than we can afford space for, here, to deal adequately with his false assumptions, hasty generalisations, and ignorant handling of the theory of statistics; and so perforce leaving aside the reasons for dissenting from his view, we simply content ourselves by pointing out his mistake.

Why a blind reliance on the guiding virtues of nasal, cephalic, and other indications is very misleading—even when the statistics are accurately manipulated, as certainly they were not by Risley—has been shown almost conclusively by Professor Boas, the head of the Immigration Department of the U. S. of America, in his valuable Report to the Congress. *Nature* (Nov. 3, 1910), reviewing it under the heading *Environment versus Heredity*, says it shows that " The influence of American environment upon the descendents of immigrants increases with the time that the immigrants have lived in the country before the birth of the children. The head form which has always been considered as one of the most stable and permanent characteristics of human races, undergoes far-reaching changes due to the transfer of the races of Europe to American soil."

" It will be perceived that there is no doubt as to the assimilation of immigrants—the climatic environment affecting the bodily form, more or less slowly, as is proved by measurements; while general personal observation shows that under the educational social and political conditions of the country the immigrants gradually change their habits of life and their ways of thinking, and thus become Americans, the social and mental change affecting questions of personal hygiene and nutrition helping on the action of the climatic environment in changing bodily form. The down-trodden, poverty-stricken, eternally-afraid, Russian-Hebrew, is a far different creature physically, mentally and morally in his third generation on the American soil."

THE ACCOUNTS OF CASTE GIVEN IN THE ANCIENT BOOKS.

Perhaps—though it is a very far off hope—a brief account of the institution as it is given in our sacred books, may help in its overthrow, by showing up the chaos reigning in the minds of its authors.

A proper study of the Rig Veda justifies the following conclusions regarding the existence of castes during those early periods of our history; (1) the four castes appear only in the Purusha-sukta, which has been believed to be later than the rest of the work; (2) the term 'varna' covers only the three higher castes—called 'brahma, 'kshatra' and 'vishah' —as contrasted with the 'dasa' or 'dasyu' (3) the word 'Brahmana' occurs rarely in the Rig Veda (S. 104-13) the word 'Kshatriya occurs seldom (ibid); 'Rajanya' only in the Purusha-sukta, where too alone the 'Vaishya' and the 'Shudra' are found;—(4) ब्रह्मन्, '*brahman*, denotes, at first *poet and sage*, and then *officiating priest* and later a particular class of priest; in some passages this latter term denotes the *priest by profession* (1·108·7);—and (5) the name 'Brahmana already denotes a hereditary professional priest. We find the system elaborated in the Yajurveda, which has been connected by scholars with the advance of the Vedic Indians to the East; the needs of a conquering people evolved the *monarch*, the lesser commanders sinking to the position of *nobles*; for meeting the attacks of the aborgines and the revolts of the conquered peoples the monarch needed an army; later on the bulk of the people, under changed climatic conditions, left the conduct of the war to the nobility and devoted themselves to agricultural and other pursuits. As for the priestly offices, they were performed, even during the Rig Veda period, by the '*Purohita*' who performed sacrifices for the king (3-33-8), though there are instances where the Prince sacrificed for himself. It was during the wars of invasion that the Purohita gained practical power. We find in the Upanishads, however, Kings exercising the priestly functions of teaching, though during that period an elaborated caste-system had fully established itself.

The regular names of the four castes are—(1) 'Brahmana,' (2) Rajanya' (or later, 'Kshattriya'), (3) 'Vaishya' and (4) 'Shudra'; though there are several variants. The relations and functions of these are graphically described in the Aitareya Brahmana (7.29): The Brahmana is the '*adayi*' (the receiver of gifts), the '*apayi*' (the drinker, of Soma), and '*yathakama-prayapya*' (moving at pleasure); the Vaishya is '*anyasya balikrit*' (tributary to another, the king), '*anyasyadya*' (to be lived upon by another), and '*yathakamajeya*' (to be subdued and oppressed at will); the Shudra is '*anyasya preshya*' (servant of another), '*kamotthapya*' (to be expelled at will), and '*yathakama-vadhya*' (to be slain at will). This description shows the relation of each of the three castes to the Kshattriya: the Brahmana he can control, while the Vaishya is his inferior and tributary, whom he can remove from the land, but who is still free, and whom he cannot maim or slay without due process; the Shudra has no rights of property or life.

Later on, we find the Brahmana described as the man of poverty, of pure life and of wisdom; the Kshattriya as the lord of land, the administrator and the protector; the Vaishya as the master of wealth, the producer and distributor of the necessaries and luxuries of life; the Shûdra, as the man of service, on whom the higher castes depend for their bodily support and comfort and whose 'glorious' privilege it is to supply these others with the means of physical living, and thus make possible their life of ease, of luxury, and of self-aggrandisement at the expense of the unhappy tillers of the soil—the Shudra *par excellence!* Unfortunately this which was regarded by its promulgators as a splendid ideal, was separated by too great a chasm from the actual possibilities of average human nature to ever become the common heritage of the race. In actual practice the result was not far akin to the state of things exemplified in the well-known Hindi proverb—"set a cat to watch the milk." It could not be otherwise, for the *ideal* was the arbitrary creator of a wild fancy which misused the *actual* by using it as a board for jumping off into cloudland. Its mischievous and illusive nature stands revealed as soon as the attempt is made to work back to the actual by applying it to human life. The worth of the 'ideal' must be largely determined by the success with which it can be realised in everyday life. No good can come from aspirations so lofty that they become fantastic. The closet-philosopher dictating from his retirement as to how men ought to be governed is of not much use in actual governmental work; for, his ideal conditions are nowhere to be met with. It is *mixed* mathematics and not *pure*, that does the work of the world. Unluckily for himself the Brahmana preacher of ideals forgot that in his incapacity to even measurably realise in his own life the ideals he preached lay the greatest danger to his order. He scarcely yet realises how sorry and contemptible is the figure he cuts because of this inability to live up to his own ideals, and how irretrievably he has damaged his cause thereby in Modern India.

A critical investigation into the social history of ancient India, as far as the existing materials will allow, reveals to us an unhappy state of Society depicted in the Samhitâs, Brahmanas, and the Purânas. We read of endless dynastic wars for purposes of self-aggrandisement turning the fair land of Bharata into a cockpit of contending chieftains, desolating peaceful home-steads and turning the huge country into one vast shambles. Every Hindu admits that the Nation began to decline after the Mahâbhârata war. But I hold that the Nation had begun to fall long before the days of the great Civil War, which marked only a well-defined stage in the progress of national decay. The cause of this decay I cannot but believe was due to to the existence of the specialised ruling and military caste to whom the possession of power and excitement of war were the only abiding interests of life and the road to honor. Every fresh quarrel, first with the Brâhmanas, for this possession of power, which the Brahmanas would not and did not after all part with, and then amongst themselves, provided employment and advancement, and allowed of the free exploitation of the Vaishyas and the Shûdras in which both the higher castes joined hands; and so the causes for a quarrel were ever actively present. By these unending quarrels, peaceful tillage and trade became impossible and the real breadwinners of the nation were starved and enslaved, and their decline ultimately reacted upon the two higher castes. This disorganisation of civil life left the country open for wave after wave of foreign conquests to dash over it and submerge its independence finally and totally.

The modern nations of the West are beginning to realise the curse of militarism, as centuries ago they realised that of ecclesiasticism and broke its back by the Protestant Reformation. May this lesson of the ruin of ancient India, due to a standing army of priests and a standing army of soldiers, prove a warning to all! The four castes were meant to be very much like the Swedish four "estates of the realm," composed of nobles, clergy, burghers, and peasants, on whose harmonious working together depended the life and activity of the realm. Later the two 'higher' castes became more and more parasitical in character, and began forming close oligarchies, making class interests paramount as against the good of the whole. The Brâhmana first became the 'medicine man', and later the 'sorcerer', by which term is to be understood a person more cunning and less scrupulous and credulous than others, adroit in reaping personal advantages, pretending to exorcise ghosts and devils, distributing all sorts of amulets, bringing rainfall, and helping barren women to get children, and so on. In the earliest days there was no question of higher and lower; consequently no jealousy of the higher and contempt for the lower : it was a case of fitness only. But the intensification of Ahamkâra, due merely to a vanity of descent wholly irrespective of merit—in fact not unoften joined to serious demerits—has produced the fruitful crop of suffering, which we are garnering to-day with unavailing tears and lamentations. Manu's treatment of the whole subject throws a lurid light on the gross ignorance and brutality of the times, as also on the overweening development of pride of power, frightful in its consequences. A person of a lower caste daring to seat himself on a level with a Brâhmana was to be cut in two at the loins; if a Shudra happened, even all unconsciously, to hear the Veda being recited, molten lead was to be poured into his ears, a non-Brâhmana keeping a Brâhmana woman was to be made to embrace a redhot iron image of the woman; and so on. Such was the 'humane' treatment meted out to the 'younger brother' as some misguided people love to call these non-Brâhmanas, blind to the terrible injustice of these old law books, faithful mirrors as they are of those "good old times" and of the fierce antagonism of race and color, as patent then as to-day.

The four castes are also said to mark in this world, the four typical stages in the evolution of a Jîva according to the scheme of the universe as imagined by the Rishis. But this attempt of some of the modern champions of the system to make it look more presentable and less repellant by quietly ignoring the actual belief on the subject of not only the ignorant millions but even of the Rishis, and their modern counterpart the Pandits, finds no support from the Hindu books. Their teachings are dead against it, as has already been pointed out. During the darker days of India's life, caste took on an ever increasingly exclusive and narrow and parasitic character, killing the possibility of a homogeneous nation and absorbing its fair life for its own deadly growth. However, now under the constant stress of modern conditions of life, a re-arrangement according to capacity, irrespective of mere caste or birth, is taking place, and the system is steadily tending to acquire the character which it had in the very earliest days, namely, division of labor, but no division in the life social, no question of high or low according to birth. Trades, professions and occupations are no longer the exclusive monopolies of particular castes. No longer does the fiction of the transmissibility of acquired skill by heredity hamper the individual in his choice of a living. Environment is coming more and more to be recognised as an all-important factor in the struggle for existence, and caste-distinction is giving way before class-distinction, which is arising out of this influence of environment. Similarly the comparatively modern interdict against interdining is gradually relaxing in favour of the liberal rules as practiced even in the days of Manu.

FURTHER EXAMINATION OF THE SYSTEM

We may examine the system in some further details now.

To begin with it must be clearly borne in mind that the four-fold caste division is wholly an artificial way of grouping together many and various tribes and trade-guilds. For instance, there never was nor is such a thing as one Shudra caste among whom there is full freedom of inter-marriage and inter-dining and who allow of their girls being taken as legal wives by the three higher castes, or who take food freely from the hands of the higher castes. The Shudra as we all know is made up of hundreds of different groups, who will neither interdine nor intermarry. Among the Shudras are reckoned even the six crores of untouchables now becoming known as the Panchamas, (the "fifth") and even these are split up into hundreds of mutually exclusive groups. Then again, no Shudra, with the single exception of the West Coast Nairs—allows his girls to be taken in marriage by the higher castes. The union of a girl outside of her customary group is invariably branded as concubinage and results in the out-casting of the girl. In matters of food again, they are generally so strict, that, for instance, the Gaderia, the Binda, sub-castes of shudras, etc., will not take even boiled milk from the hands of a Brahman, what to say of cooked rice. With regard to menial service also there are many Shudra castes who refuse to wash the loin cloths and kitchen utensils of any others.

The four distinct qualifications assigned as inherent among the four castes, have in short never been distinct and separate. In the very nature of things it is utterly absurd to assert such a specialisation of function. All the four qualifications are to be found in all the four castes and are not the special prerogatives of particular castes as the Brahmanical books falsely assert. सर्वं सर्वत्रविद्यते is one of their own honored maxims, and every quality, good, bad, or indifferent, exists in every human being, though in varying measure; no one is compounded of pure Sattva, or pure Rajas, or pure Tamas, still less communities. While it is a toss-up as to what is the predominant characteristic of an individual, it is a certainty that communities as a whole are very like each other in the matter of 'qualifications.' None has the right to crow over the others.

Similarly the terms Brahman, Kshatriya or Rajput and Vaishya are merely a classificatory convenience. Each comprises under one head many hundreds of mutually exclusive groups which observe no trade-guild monopoly. Everyone of the three carries on every known means of earning a livelihood —criminal, sinful, prohibited, or lawful. Out of the three Brahmanic monopolies fenced in by terrible penalties, namely the sole right to be the teacher, to be the recipient of charity (dakshina, 'backsheesh'), and to officiate as priests at sacrifices, only the last and empty monopoly remains; and even that is being broken in the Arya Samàj. Further, the birth-system of social precedence has been very largely displaced by the worth-system of gradation. The graduated reverence from the lower to the higher and still higher caste exists only in the books. No long-drawn arguments are needed to prove that the imposing list of qualities, asserted by our sacred books to be inherent in the members of the four castes respectively, are barefaced impositions. Not half per cent of the one crore of Brahmanas can pass the tests of what a Brahman should be according to Manu, Gita, the Mahabharata, and other holy lore. Nor have the ten crores of Shudras ever been only slaves to the three higher castes. Numbers of them have possessed the Brahmanical qualifications and have been saints and sages, have been chieftains and rulers, traders, and agriculturists. Similarly Kshatriyas and Vaishyas.

There is no basis in nature for the system. If there had been any, then the children of mixed unions would have shown as marked physical and mental characteristics as the hybrids in the animal kingdom do. That nature does not justify any such distinction, is proved by the fact that she does her best to give a fair start to every being that she brings into existence. Most normal children, at birth, are nearly similarly endowed with natural powers and faculties. It is the environment that is chiefly to blame for stunted and ænemic growths. For instance, if the food-problem were solved in the proper manner, and all mothers given the proper training for nursing children, not a hundredth part of the evil that we witness in the world would remain. Well-fed and well-cared-for infants would grow up into healthy adults with instincts unperverted, and able and willing to perform all the duties of their life, instead of being perverse creatures, physically, mentally and morally, unable to form rational views of life, or to behave themselves decently. That all distinctions were originally attempted to be based upon the qualities manifested by the man in his actions in the world under circumstances peculiar to his case, is proved by the declaration of Krishna in the Bhagavadgita that the 'four castes' were divided in accordance with qualities and actions.

A similar statement is made by Manu (1-31), which has been interpreted by his oldest commentator, Medhatithi, to mean that the four castes were not literally created through the mouth, the arms, the thighs, and the feet, respectively, of Brahma, that Manu's statement is mere Artha-vada, meant to show the consideration that was extended to each class, and the social grading of the workers of each of the four kinds. In fact it is the same old tale which Plato, with his magnificent rhetoric of the closet, coupled with a woeful ignorance of the real world, has outlined in his *Republic.* In Greece luckily it remained a fine academic performance and was never translated into practical life, thus saving European civilisation from the monster's grip and making it possible for even India to learn to struggle against its deadly embrace.

Our environments are being changed for us, no matter whether or not we want the change; and these are producing their inevitable result in a changed outlook on the world; the Purohîta's son does not believe in becoming a Purohita in his turn; he goes in for Law, and ends as a High Court Judge or a Viceregal Councillor. The spirit of barter has come over the Nation as a whole, and the first question that presents itself before everyone is—'what will be my gain?'

THE ORIGIN OF THE SUB-CASTES

The old Hindu legists speak of the ancient aboriginal people as the offspring of those Aryans who had broken through the strict marriage law laid down by them: and each ethnic group was given some such fanciful genealogy as that, for instance, which Manu gives for the Ambashtha. These fanciful genealogies are on a par with the history of creation, where from one Rishi and his two wives all sorts of human and non-human beings are said to have been born. One can only believe that all this wonderful anthropological derivation had some ulterior motive to serve and was not mere random fancy. We may dimly sense how this treatment of the conquered races was tried to be forced on the powerful neighbouring races, and had to be modified by enfolding them within the system itself, their own priests becoming their 'Brâhmanas' and so forth. This ethnic distinction is at the root of the sub-caste system of modern India.

GREATER ELASTICITY IN EARLIER TIMES.

Though there is much to show that the priests and nobles did follow hereditary occupations, there is nothing to show that the classification and division was, originally, so rigid as it is now. For instance, we find the Shatapatha Brahmana (10.4.1.10) indicating the possibility of the change of caste, and in the Aitareya Brahmana (7.29) we read of a priest declaring that if a wrong offering were made his children would be of the three other castes. Later on in the epic period, the possibility of change due to character is clearly recognised. For instance, Apastamba (2.5.10.11) says—

धर्मचर्यया जघन्यो वर्णः पूर्वंपूर्वं वर्णमापद्यते जातिपरिवृत्तौ ।
अधर्मचर्यया पूर्वोवर्णोऽघन्यंजघन्यं वर्णमापद्यते जातिपरिवृत्तौ ॥

'By virtuous behaviour the lower caste becomes gradually higher and higher, by the process of caste-transformation; and by sinful behaviour the higher caste becomes lower and degraded by the process of caste-transformation.'

Manu (X 65)

> 'The Shudra attains Brahmanahood and the Brahmana falls into the position of the Shudra; as also one born of the Kshattriya or of the Vaishya.'

The Mahabharata (Anushasana parva)—

> 'The basis of Brahmanahood lies in Character alone—not in birth, or sacraments, or learning, or progeny; one becomes a Brahmana by his deeds, not by his family or birth; even the Chandala is a Brahmana if he is of pure character.'

In fact the idea of a hereditary priesthood is on a par with the idea of hereditary servitude, which is the natural corollary of the former; they are both as illogical as the idea of hereditary judges and juries, as absurd as that of hereditary mathematicians and scientists, as ridiculous as that of hereditary poets, prophets, *avatars* and apostles.

THE PANCHAMA CASTE

As for the 'Untouchable' or Panchama caste, there is no mention of it in our sacred literature; in fact in Vedic literature there is scarcely any trace of the idea of impurity communicated by the touch of an inferior caste. Manu also does not know of it. But there are many communities which have not yet come definitely within the Hindu social organisation, mostly because of their total disregard of the rules of cleanliness and purity, diet and drink, their eating of cows and pigs and dogs, and even carrion, and getting shamelessly drunk. Individuals here and there among these degraded people have risen, and have been recognised as saints, because of the holy and spiritual lives of great power led by them. But these tribes or castes can only hope to rise in the social scale as a whole only by giving up the said ugly un-Hindu practices, and by persistently educating themselves.

In this difference of habits lies the real basis of the cleavage between the Pariah and the Brahman, and not in any supposed ethnological difference, as was shrewdly pointed out by Nesfield, who could see no facial or nasal index-differences between the Brahman students of the Sanskrit College and the low untouchables. All the difference lay in their different cultures. This commodity is not transmissible by physiological heredity. Each baby begins its education on a blank sheet. The vast over-powering possession —a sort of physical envelope of customs, taboos, traditions, laws and knowledge—which man in the course of ages has created for himself, is not transmitted as a part of his structure to the new individual at his birth; but he gets his education through this all-compelling heritage. This heritage is put into his possession by gestures, by spoken, written, or printed words, by the training given in the nursery and the school and by the experience of life. In fact each family, each caste, sub-caste, class and sub-class, has a body of such traditions and usages which it transmits to its successors; and it is this that differentiates it from its neighbours, and not any such inherent biological difference in the germ-plasm as differentiates one species from another, an ass from a horse, a sheep from a wolf.

The Kashmiri Pandits, as pointed out by Buhler, actually belong to several distinct races.

OUR DUTY TO THE PANCHAMA

Though there may not be ascertainable any such racial physiological differences, yet the term Panchama is a convenient one to designate these various degraded and backward peoples. It subserves the purpose of welding them into one; it has been accepted by the British Government; and is daily becoming more popular.

We owe a distinct duty to these fallen peoples. For their present degraded and helpless condition is mostly due to our conquering ancestors and it should be our duty and our pride to undo, so far as we may, the wrong inflicted on these hapless communities. Not until we help to shatter the fetters that bind these poor folk, socially and intellectually, in the different Provinces of India, is there a chance of our blossoming out from our present degenerate condition into a great, powerful and homogeneous nation, like the holy lotus flower of our sacred land from the primeval slime. We ought to take a lesson from the Japanese, whom we have become so fond of always quoting and admiring, with regard to this question. The Emperor, with the willing consent of all his subjects, has abolished all legal and social differences and disabilities that pressed so heavily on the lower castes, so that to-day they all stand as *one*. Are we, the admirers of Modern Japan, who also had 'untouchables' known as 'Hini,' prepared to do as much, and carry out in actual life the teachings we admire so much, or are we to continue paying mere hollow lip-service to fine sentiments as of yore, and never stirring a finger to realise them? Are we to forget that there are instances in Modern India of classes of people who are supposed by some to be cross between Moslem men and Hindu women but have been admitted into Hinduism and become claimants to the Vaishya rank?

We have attuned our conscience to the touch of the fierce Mussalmân. We have again attuned it to the touch of the conquering Christian. It is time now to attune it to the touch of the Chândâla. Let us beware, while there is yet time, lest the poor despised Pariahs learn the lesson, all too fatal for Hinduism, that their salvation lies only through wholesale conversions to the religion of their present-day rulers.

To sum up what we have said so far, *there is hardly a caste or class in India which has not a foreign strain in it.* There is an admixture of alien blood, not only amongst the warrior classes—the Rajput and the Maratha,—but also among the Brahmanas, however much they may try to delude themselves and others that they are perfectly free from all foreign elements. As a fact their most revered and ancient Rishis were 'low-born' and 'hybrids.' Vasishtha was born of a prostitute, Vyasa of a fish-girl, and Parashara of a 'Chandala' girl—all this we learn from the Mahabharata itself. Many, बहव: became Brahmanas.

> गणिकागर्भसंम्भूतो वसिष्ठश्च महामुनिः
> तपसा ब्राह्मणोजातः संस्कारस्तत्र कारणम् ।
> जातौव्यासस्तु कैवर्त्याः श्वपाक्यास्तु पराशरः
> बहवोऽन्येपि विप्रत्वं प्राप्ता ये पूर्वमद्विजाः ॥

If the Brahmanas have not escaped this taint, and yet call themselves Brahmanas, it excites the risibility of the antiquarian and the ethnologist when he finds some Brahman castes seriously calling into question the claims of certain warrior-classes to style themselves Kshatriyas.

The grounds of this strenuous opposition, as stated by the Brahman castes, are that "pure unmixed Vedic Aryan blood"—whatever this may mean—does not run though the veins of those classes. Yes; this is quite true; but it is equally true that "pure Vedic Aryan blood" does not run through the veins of the Brahmanas also. Looked at from the antiquarian or the ethnologist point of view, the claims of either community to such purity are untenable and absurd. As the chief thing valued by the members of the higher castes—*viz.*, the purity of blood—*i.e.*, absence of any admixture of aboriginal or foreign blood—has been proved to be hollow and non-existent; the caste-jealousies and controversies, which cause immense mischief, are really useless and meaningless. It is to be sincerely hoped that the study of ancient inscriptions will spread among the people and open their eyes to the emptiness and worthlessness of the thing they are fighting for, and put an end to all caste-animosities and disputes which are the bane of India.—(D. R. Bhandarkar, *Indian Antiquary*, January, 1911.)

The fact of the matter is that the Hindu, (like any and every other race or community of the human world) whether in the totality or in any smallest group of a sub-caste even, is not pure-bred but poly-bred; and the attempts to explain caste as wholly either a question of the amount of purity of blood, or of the social standard of gradation of various occupations, are both equally futile. The all important question for us is not how caste came into existence, but whether it is to the benefit of the country and the people as a whole, or to their harm. I hold that the institution is a thoroughly discredited one and injures us in numberless ways, and it ought to go, the sooner the better. Of course over and above the banded forces of vested interests, there is the tremendous power of inertia barring all change; but the political, social, economic, and intellectual dominance of the Englishman in this country is surely and steadily making for the change. It has become a fashion among Brahmans, especially of the Madras Presidency, where there is a very sharp antagonism between the Brahman and the non-Brahman, to call all those who advocate either a change in the present system of caste by making it elastic, or advocate its abolition, Brahman-haters and to freely question their motives.

I have been bluntly asked by such gentry whether I was a Brahman-lover or a Brahman-hater. What answer can one give to such idiotic questions? For the much-hammered Brahman is not the only or the greatest sinner in this respect; the non-Brahmans, the Shudras, and even the untouchables, are greater sinners if possible. It is the *system* that is hateful.

MUTUAL DUTIES.

It is all very well for the Brahman to assert that he exists for the well-being of the world; but if this is not to excite the bitter laughter of contempt, then let him pull his own weight first, and then, if he has any surplus energy left, devote it to the well-being of others; let him cease to be an economic burden on the shoulders of those whose benefactor he poses to be. It is a crying injustice that these one crore of Brahmans among 20 crores of Hindus do not throw themselves into the struggle for existence, but take sinister advantage of their sacredotal position. If they must come down into the arena, they must throw off their Brahmanic armour. The cloistered life is only for the very few.

Laws and customs exist to secure Right, Justice, Equity. If they fail in this, they lose their claim to obedience; bad rulers, bad laws, bad customs destroy their own authority and justify rebellion.

The Brahman committed the fatal mistake of trying to play Providence in Mediæval India, as the Englishman is committing a similar fatal blunder in playing Providence in Modern India. Both have done an immense amount of good in their time, and theoretically at least, no less mischief out of sheer bumptiousness. The Brahman may have had some justification, seeing that he bound his order to plain living and high thinking, to poverty and to other-worldliness; but not so the Englishman; his outlook is wider, his temper, at home and among his own people democratic, his life wholly worldly, devoted to money and land-grabbing. He is, while helping us to the sorely needed enfranchisement from Brahmanocracy—through his belligerent western civilisation and political and social dominance, reducing all the classes and all the castes to one dead low level of the Shudra as compared with this western Brahman himself, who is a strange amalgam of Brahman, Kshatriya and Vaishya—at the same time sowing seeds of even a wider enfranchisement in the fullness of time. He is teaching us self-assertion as against self-suppression, exuberant boisterousness as against milk-soppy tameness.

Not God, but man, has made a slave of his brother man to exploit him. While equality may not be possible, liberty and fraternity certainly are. It is the glamour-ridden Shudra who must awake and assert his right to be treated as a legal equal, and pluck liberty and fraternity; he should not wait for charity. Let him see to it that he helps himself, that he does not allow others to starve him physically and morally, intellectually and emotionally.

Personality can be developed only by communion with other personalities and not through an aloof self-centred self-assertion. Personality represents the process of action and reaction in an organised society.

The success of a civilisation is to be measured, not by the well-being of a privileged caste, but by making it possible for all its members to make the best of themselves, to make themselves more than mere marionettes dancing to the string-pulling of the 'Brahman,' whether Eastern or Western.

The utter rout, the hopeless breakdown of the whole system of caste is exemplified in every nook and corner of India—from the days of Cyrus, Darius and Alexander, downwards through the bitter agony of the Moslem occupation of the country; the widespread ruins of architecture testify for all those who have eyes to see and ears to hear that the Hindu Polity of those 2500 years has failed to be the bulwark of Hindu faith and the channel for conveying uncontaminated its culture. The Kshatriya has proved a rotten reed in the defence of the country; the Vaishya has not brought wealth to the land, nor the Brahman, learning—unless the useless knowledge of the sacrificial art be called 'learning.'

Judged by the present-day condition of India, it must be said that the caste-system as now working has to be abolished altogether, if the Indian people are to have a new lease of life. In the absence of reliable historical records, it may perhaps be disputed and asserted that it did serve a useful purpose in past ages, somehow; but to-day it is proving an unmitigated means of regress and hindrance to all progress. Let us hope that the Soul of India will throw off the effete and put on new and living laws and dharmas of individual and social life and organisation, and manifest its inherent greatness by reincarnation in a fresh culture and civilisation.

But this greatness is not to be achieved in a day or by violent or criminal methods; nor is it to be gained by newer and more catching shibboleths which only help to further subdivide the already over-divided country into rival and hostile camps. If self-respect is not to be mere sham and vanity it must be based on sobriety of judgment born of a critical and accurate knowledge of history and of methods of investigation and of the laws of evidence. The possession of a sterling character therefore is absolutely necessary in each individual composing the nation. For without it there will not be the requisite strength which takes the man straight to the goal which his well-trained and keen vision has perceived in the far distance.

> "The world advances, and in time out-grows
> The laws that in our fathers' days were best
> And doubtless after us, some puror scheme
> Will be shaped out by wiser men than we,
> Made wiser by the steady growth of truth."
>
> *Lowell.*

Our great sage and Teacher Vyasa says, again and again, " The rules of Dharma are intended only to make human life easier and happier. Men should always shape their Dharma from time to time in accordance with the needs of that time, for good reasons. The rights and duties of the man in one set of conditions differ from those of him in another set; no one custom is useful for always and for all." And Manu teaches, "He only understands Dharma who scrutinises with the eye of reason." Only by thus using the eye of reason and making necessary changes from time to time in their ways of living, will that fifth of mankind which calls itself Hindu to-day, move forward steadily on the path of progress and happiness.

लोकयात्रार्थमेवेह धर्मस्य नियमः कृतः ।
लोकसंग्रहसंयुक्तं विधात्रा विहितं पुरा ॥
अकारणो हि नैवास्ति धर्मः सूक्ष्मोऽपि जाजले ।
कारणाद् धर्ममन्विच्छेन न लोकं विरसं चरेत् ॥
अन्यो धर्मः समस्थस्य विषमस्थस्य चापरः ।
नहि सर्वहितः कश्चिदाचारः संप्रवर्तते ॥
तेनैवान्यः प्रभवति सोऽपरं बाधते पुनः ।
यस्तर्केणानुसंधत्ते स धर्मं वेद नेतरः ॥

Mbh. Shanti Chs: 255, 268 and Manu.

INDEX

PAGE

A

Acharadhyaya ... 75
Adharma & Dharma ... 220
Adhvaryu ... 87
Adhyatma Shastra ... 69
Agama, The growth of... 125
Agnihotra, Ceremony of 279
Agnimitra ... 6
Ahimsa ... 225
Allah ... 147
Anasa, meaning of ... 410
„ The Theory of 419, 420
Anglo-Mohamedan Law 55
Antahkarana ... 62
Antiquary, Indian ... 440
Apastamba, days of ... 98
Aranyakas ... 107
Aranyaka, Taittiriya ... 240
Arjuna ... 40
„ and Krishna ... 59
Arnold, Sir Edwin ... 74
Áryans, Migration of ... 189
Art, paucity of Hindu ... 191
Arya Samajists 82, 226
Ashaucha ... 315
Ashrama ... 301
Ashwini Kumaras ... 270
Asoka ... 5
Asura and Sura ... 160
Ashwaghosha ... 128
Ashwamedha ... 223
Atharva Veda 52, 86, 90, 91, 94, 95, 96, 97
„ „ Angirasas of 97
„ „ & other Vedas 95
Atma 206, 207
Avataras, Belief in ... 54
„ Theory of ... 179
Avidyas ... 333

PAGE

B

Balarama ... 169
Bana ... 337
Benares ... 402
Benares, Buddhist ... 403
Bhagavad-Gita 39, 40, 43, 337
Bhagavata ... 50
„ Dharma ... 39
Bhakti 169, 170, 172
Bhandarkar, D. R. ... 440
Bharatavarsha, days of. 124
Bhartrihari ... 129
Bhashya, Shariraka ... 59
Bhattabhaskara ... 86
Bhavishya Purana ... 57
Bhrigu ... 114
Bhutayajna ... 346
Bozzolo, Dr. ... 270
Brahma ... 162
Brahma-vidya 17, 108, 109
Brahma-worship, ... 184
Brahmana, Duties of ... 424
„ texts of ... 105
Brahmanas—Influence of the 408, 409
„ Origin of the Saraswat ... 83
Brahmanda Purana ... 116
Brahmanic Supremacy 7
Brahmanocracy ... 442
Brihadaranyaka ... 103
Brihat—Katha ... 142
Buddha 173, 174, 176, 177
Buddhism 41, 118
„ Spread of ... 392
Buddhist Shrines ... 403

C

Caste 7,393 to 445
„ —What it means... 403

PAGE

Caste in ancient books ... 422
,, and Colour 404, 405
,, distinctions, ... 418
,, Division of ... 411
,, duties of the four 407
,, functional and hereditary ... 409
,, & foreign element 438
,, mutual duties ... 441
,, origin of ... 409
,, orthodox assertions about ... 394
,, System, 52, 75, 76, 443
,, ,, Examination of 429
,, ,, The Pasing of the ... 400
,, The system and its origin ... 406
,, theories of ... 419
Castes, the four ... 423
Celibacy, power of ... 294
Chaldeans ... 282
Chamars ... 346
Chandala ... 61
Charavakas, The ... 88
Chandogya 257, 304
Charaka ... 321
Charana—Vyuha ... 84
Chentsal Row, P. ... 386
Christianity and Islam, Evolution of ... 26
Chyavana ... 129
Civil code, need for ... 24
,, Marriage Bill ... 21
Civilisation, Hindu ... 395
Conscience, liberty of ... 22
Consciousness, universal, 162
,, The three states of 208
Conservatism, Inertia misnamed ... 12
Colour and Caste ... 404
Coomaraswamy, A. K.... 197
Cremation ... 303
Customs, nature and growth of, ... 231
Cycles, the theory of, ... 202

PAGE

D

Dadhichi ... 84
Dana ... 350
Dayananda 13, 120, 285
Dharma ... 65
,, and Adharma 63, 220
,, —bhiru ... 67
,, definition of 61, 72, 73
,, Sanatana ... 145
,, its secondary meanings of... 68
,, —Shastras ... 59
,, Sutras ... 114
,, Vaisheshika's definition of ... 73
Divorce ... 287
Dhruva, Anandashankara Bappubhai ... 55
Dress of the Women ... 389
Drugs and drinks, evils of 331

E

Eggs, & flesh, prohibition of 324
—Endowment, Religious 354
European Missionary, failure of ... 398
Evolution of Christianity and Islam... 26
,, Hinduism .. 27
,, Stages of Tribal ... 98

F

Fanaticism, Islamic ... 403
Fraser, Dr., ... 327

G

Canesha ... 267
Gayitri 251, 252 255, 256, 257
Ghazni, Mahmud of ... 185
Gita 39, 40, 43, 74, 167, 226, 227
Gita Govinda ... 175
God, an extra-cosmic ... 65
Gods, The Evolution of ... 145
,, The Three Major 162
Gotama, The System of 78
Gotra and Pravara ... 380
Gotras, Number of ... 407

PAGE

Grihya Sutras 79, 114
Gunadhya ... 144
Gunas, number of ... 207

H

Haddon—Prof. A.C. ... 67
Harivamsha 111, 142
Harsha Charita ... 337
Harrison, Dr. ... 327
Havell, E. B. ... 196
Hemchandra ... 130
Hell, nature of 211, 212
Hinduism, an Anthropological process 80
  ,, Changing ... 226
  ,, Definition and Sources of ... 45
  ,, Detailed treatment of the Source—books of ... 81
  ,, Evolution of ... 27
  ,, Failure of ... 2
  ,, free and untrammelled 50
  ,, Its fundamental teachings 158
  ,, Lack of historical spirit 13
  ,, Latter-day ... 79
  ,, Liberal interpretation of ... 60
  ,, Literary foundation of ... 81
  ,, Origin of the word ... 46
  ,, Post-Vedic ... 118
  ,, Source books of 81
  ,, Sources of ... 77
  ,, Special rites and usages of 232
  ,, Stages of caste-movement in... 412
  ,, The heart of Present day... 394
Hindu Civilisation 18, 395
  ,, Law, application of 56
  ,, Pantheon ... 2

PAGE

Hindu Polity ... 4
  ,, Widows ... 24
Hindus, Krishchana ... 58
  ,, the Philosophy of 158
Hota ... 86
Humanist Nationalism... 37
Hymns, old & new ... 100

I

Idolatry ... 403
Images ... 187
Indra ... 160
Indrajala ... 74
Infanticide ... 224
Interpretation, method of 101
Ishakrishta, Avathara of 57
Isha-Putra, ,, ... 57
Ishwara 41, 159
  ,, in three aspects. 159
Islam and Christianity, Evolution of ... 26
Islamic Fanaticism ... 403
Itihasa ... 118

J

Jabalopanishad ... 247
Jaimini, the system of ... 78
Jainas, Digambar ... 83
Jainism 41, 177
Jimutavahana, Digest of 25
Jiva 208, 209
Jivatma 168, 222, 223

K

Kaaba, idolatry of ... 403
Kabir 38, 113
Kalidasa ... 291
Kalingo ... 55
Kalki ... 178
Kalpa Sutras ... 90
Kamalakara 191, 198
Kamashastra ... 114
Kamatah Vyavaharyah 102
Karma, Agami ... 218
  ,, Belief in ... 54
  ,, Doctrine of 215, 216, 217
  ,, Prarabdha ... 218
  ,, Sanchita ... 218
  ,, Three kinds of ... 218

PAGE

Karmakanda ... 28
Kashi 38, 39
Kathaka Samhita ... 405
Katha Sarit Sagara ... 143
Keenarum, Baba ... 337
Keith, A. B. ... 108
Kshatriya, duties of ... 424
Koran ... 147
Krishna 40, 41
" and Arjuna ... 59
Krishna-cult 167, 169
Krishchana Hindus ... 58
Kshmendra ... 144
Kurukshetra, ... 60
Kushilavas ... 129

L

Language and Script ... 146
Law Digests ... 128
Leland C. G. ... 101
Libels, Christian ... 289
Loeb, Prof. ... 235
Logos ... 181
Lomaharsana ... 116

M

Madhwa ... 103
Magic and Religion, ... 66
Mahabharata 111, 140, 141
" Caste in ... 406
" Prajagara-Parva 63
" and Ramayana 128
Mahamoda, Rishi ... 58
Maha-Nirvana Tantra... 127
Mahidhara-Commentary on Yajurveda ... 86
Mahmud of Ghazni ... 185
Malabar System of caste 414
Manava-Dharma ... 58
Manawas, School of, ... 115
Mandlik, Mr. on Gotras 385
Man, The Constitution of, 205
Mantra ... 245
" Saptapadi ... 275
Manu ...59, 69
" on Caste System 407
" —on classification of Pitris ... 365
" on Dharma 76, 445

PAGE

Manu on Intermarriages 411
" Panchamas ... 435
" Smritis of, ... 114
" on Sources of Hinduism ... 77
Margoliouth, Prof., 48, 322
Marriage 272, 277
" Age for ... 276
" dissolution of 282
" —Malabar system of ... 414
Marriages among Sub-castes ... 411
Mathas, Immoral influence of, ... 10
Matsya Purana 90, 91
Max-Nordau ... 269
Medhatithi ... 432
Mendicancy ... 303
Mimansa 53, 61
Mimansas, Purva and Uttara ... 78
Mimansa system, metaphysics of, ... 79
Miracle monger ... 7
Monogamy ... 286
Morality and Religion ... 68
Muhammad 27, 48
" farsighted diplomatist 403
Murray, Prof. Gilbert ... 146
Music & Architecture ... 195
Mysticism and Rationalism ... 74

N

Nagari Pracharini Patrika ... 83
Nairs ... 414
Nair Girls ... 284
" Women, Economic Independence of ... 415
Nambudris 289, 414
Nanak ... 113
Narada, Smritis of ... 114
Nastika ... 225
Nationalism, false ... 18
" The Coming humanist... 37

PAGE

Neo-Vedic Revivalists .. 103
Newars of Nepal ... 284
Newari Women ... 417
Nirukta ... 159
Niyoga ... 285
Nordau, Max ... 269

O

Occult lore ... 17
Old texts, explanation of 16
Om ... 153
Origin of Caste, explanation of, ... 407
Other worlds ... 210

P

Padmanabha ... 352
Panchama ... 435
" our duty to, 437
Pantheism, the truths of 92
Parashara ... 438
" Smritis of ... 114
Pariah ... 417
Patanjali ... 75
Paundarika sacrifice ... 107
Phoenecians ... 155
Pitris ... 363
" days of the ... 204
Polity, Vedic ... 115
Polygamy 123, 280
Prakrit 147, 150, 151
Pralaya & Shrishti ... 112
Pranava upasana ... 247
Pranayama ... 266
Pratishakhya Sutras ... 114
Pravara & Gotra ... 380
Prayashchitta ... 357
Progressives, a hand book for ... 30
Prophets of Khorasan ... 11
Punsavana, Ceremony of 235
Purana, Bhagavata ... 170
Puranas 89, 115, 119
" a list of 121, 122
" Causes of Multiplication of the, 118
" definition of, ... 115
Purana, Matsya— 90, 91
" preachers of ... 11

PAGE

Purana, Samhitas ... 116
" The Garuda, ... 312
" Vayu ... 91
Puranas, the number of, 77, 78
" The wrong and the right ways of dealing with, 119
" and Vedas, 122, 123
Purohita ... 423
Pushyamitra ... 118

R

Rajah of Cochin ... 416
" Travancore ... 416
Rama ... 164
Ramananda ... 113
Ramanuja ... 109
Ramayana 111, 128, 133
" date of, the 137
" different kinds of... 131
" and Mahabharata, ... 128
" in other languages 138
Ranade, on Widow Marriage ... 283
Rationalism, Ecclesiastical ... 64
" and Mysticism ... 74
Re-birth .. 213
Religions, comparative study of ... 25
Religion, origin of ... 71
" playground of emotions ... 71
Rig Veda ... 85
" —on Caste system ... 422
Rishabhadeva ... 177
Rishis, The Vedic ... 295
Risley, Sir, H. H. ... 419
" " on Dravidian India ... 420
Rites, after death ... 307
" and ceremonials, Interpretation of ... 38
Rothfeld, Otto ... 291

PAGE

S

Sacred Books ... 110
Sacrifice, Soma ... 86
Sacrifices and Madhwacharya ... 225
Sakti—worship ... 336
Samaveda ... 86
Samhita, Kathaka— ... 405
Samhitas ... 92
" Language of the, 101, 149
" Their mutual relation ... 93
Samjna ... 271
Samskaras ... 233
" description of 236
" True nature of 234
Samsara ... 42
Sanatana Dharma... 28, 230
Sandhya, for women ... 132
Sandhyopasana ... 244
Sankhya philosophy ... 124
" and Yoga ... 74
Sannyasa ... 302
Sanskrit, significance of the word ... 147
" and Prakrit ... 150
Sapinda ... 374
Sapta-Sindhu ... 47
Sati ... 224
Satpantha Shastra ... 55
Saundaryalahari ... 127
Sayana—Commentary on Yajurveda ... 86
Script and Language ... 146
Shankara ... 103
Shankaracharya ... 59
" and Chandala ... 397
Shankara-Digvijaya ... 120
Shantis ... 343
Shariraka Bhashya ... 59
Shaucha ... 320
Shaunaka ... 84
Shiva ... 182
Shradd ... 367
Shra ... 99
... 114

PAGE

Shrishti & Pralaya ... 112
Shudra 305, 417
Shvetashvatara ... 304
Skanda Purana ... 57
Smritis 79, 114
Smriti Yajnayavalkya ... 267
Somadeva ... 144
Soma sacrifice ... 86
Sorcery, domestic ... 86
Soul, transmigration of 215
Spandapradipika ... 127
Speyer, Prof. J. S. ... 145
Sub-castes, origin of the 433
Sudakshina ... 291
Sudras, duties of ... 424
Supernaturalism, Influence of ... 9
Sura and Asura ... 160
Sutra, Manava Grihya... 268
" Kama ... 283
Sutras ... 113
" Grihya 79, 233, 242
" Kalpa ... 90
" Shrauta ... 223
System of Badarayana... 78

T

Taittiriya Aranyaka ... 240
Tantras, Works on, 1, 124, 127
Tattooing ... 390
Theology ... 326
Theosophy ... 17
Thiruvapad ... 414
Travee Vidya ... 95
Tribal Evolution, stages of ... 98
Tulasidas 7, 15, 166, 401
" Ramayana of 139
Tulsi plant ... 166

U

Ubbata—Commentary on Yajurveda ... 86
Unrest, The cause of ... 36
Upanayana ... 237
Upanishads ... 108
" Chandogya 257, 331
" classification of 109
" philosophy of 14
"

PAGE

Upasana ... 261
Upa-Vedas ... 79
Utsavas ... 347
Uttararama Charita ... 132

V

Vaghbhata ... 321
Vaidya, C. V. ... 132
Vaishnavas, Chaitanya 50
Vaishyas, duties of ... 424
Vakpatiraj ... 152
Vallabhacharya Sect 10. 188
Valmiki, Rishi ... 128
Vana-Parva ... 199
Vanaprastha ... 301
Varna, Etimology of the word ... 405
" Keshwara ... 127
Vasishta. birth of ... 438
" and Visvamitra 393
Vatsyayana ... 283
Vayu Purana ... 91
Veda, The Brahma ... 87
" The Atharva ... 94
" meaning of the word ... 81
Vedas. 8
" back to the ... 19
" as index to social conditions ... 104
.. the authorship of Saraswata ... 83
" Eternity of the ... 87
" the four ... 85
" and Puranas, 122, 123
" —Samhitas 78, 92
" Upanishads, ... 78
Vedic polity ... 115
" —Samhitas ... 30
Viduraniti ... 63
Vidyasagar, Ishwara Chandra ... 283
Vira Simha Deva ... 170
Virata Rupa ... 59

PAGE

Vishnu ... 163
Visvamitra ... 260
" & Vasishita... 393
Vratas ... 343
Vratyastoma ... 50
Vyasa 438, 444
" —Author of the Vedas ... 84

W

Widow, re-marriage of 282
Wilson, Sir Roland ... 55
Women-- 272, 274
, and sandhya ... 132
Woodroffe, Sir John ... 127
Worlds, other ... 210
Worship, current forms of ... 183
" of trees, etc. ... 387

Y

Yajna ... 222
Yajnavalkya ... 326
" on sources of dharma ... 77
" Smriti ... 267
" Smritis of ... 114
" the injunction of ... 75
Yajurveda ... 85
Yamalas ... 127
Yashovarman ... 152
Yatras ... 349
Yogavasishta ... 138.
Yogini—Hridaya ... 127
Yuga, Dwapara ... 202
" Kali ... 201
" —Krita ... 199
" Treta ... 200
Yugas, the theory of ... 199

Z

Zam-Zam-Kunda ... 58
Zarathustra ... 412
Zoroastrianism ... 309

Recommended By लक्ष्मेश्वरी,

89716

Class on
Cat. on
Tag etc.
Checked
Any Other

27.11.86

2.87

L.K.-26-5-87

5.87

EAR

1-9-87

STOCK VERIFY
2020
G.K.V. Library

Jacket Printed at : G. K. Fine Art Press

OUR OTHERS PUBLICATIONS

Sidney owen	
An Analytical History of Medieval India	140
S R. Sharma	
TheCrescent in India	200
D K. Sen	
The History of the Indian States	175
Govinda Das	
Hinduism	275
Frank Fox	
The History of British Empire	125
Nanadolal Dey	
Civilization in Ancient India	150

SANJAY PRAKAS
IX, 5997, Gandhi Na
Delhi-110031.